

THE
INFLUENCE OF ARISTOCRACIES

ON THE
REVOLUTIONS OF NATIONS ;

CONSIDERED
IN RELATION TO THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE
BRITISH EMPIRE.

BY JAMES J. MACINTYRE.

“ THEREFORE, SINCE LAW ITSELF IS PERFECT WRONG,
HOW CAN THE LAW FORBID MY TONGUE TO CURSE ?”

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P R E F A C E.

THIS Work is an attempt to bring from general history, ancient and modern, a few passages to bear upon the peculiar condition of the British empire, in its political, fiscal, commercial, and colonial relations, but particularly on those circumstances which affect the comfort and happiness of the great mass of the people.

This attempt may be compared, or likened, to the action of a man, with a sounding-staff in his hand, who walks over the surface of history, and endeavours to indicate where danger exists beneath, in consequence of the hollowness of the ground, or of the collection of materials in a state of fermentation, which will work into an explosion. The conclusion, or result of the investigation and comparison, is, that there is at present, in this country, the excited action

of that law of society that terminates in social convulsion, out of which will arise the body of military despotism, or, will emerge a new constitutional fabric, cemented in the alluvium deposited by the flood of revolution.

It is painful to reflect, that we cannot find out in the dominant party in the State, any extraordinary degree of human virtue, or a disposition to give up, voluntarily, a part of its usurped power over the fiscal or proprietary rights of the mass of the population, which would give to the surrender the grace, or at least the appearance, of a patriotic sacrifice. We can discover in the British Aristocratic power, no disposition to deliver on the altar of the country, the offering of selfish interests ;—and, in accordance with the principles of human nature, as displayed in historical action in every country and every age, we can only expect to see the power thus wielded, wrung from the possessors palsied by their terrors, or wrested from them by the moral force of opinion, or otherways.

This work, though of a decided character as respects its political views, cannot be entitled a work of a party nature, in the ordinary meaning of the

expression. Its party character consists only in the advocacy of the great party or cause of the people. Throughout the whole of it, we are not aware, that the word Radical or Chartist appears; and the two alternately dominant parties, Tories and Whigs, are only cursorily alluded to, in the consideration of the political events of the last few years. The classes of persons, who are politically called Radicals and Chartists, are, we presume, striving to escape from the effects of a system, which they find to be unjust and oppressive to themselves and families; and if, in the endeavours to save themselves, their wives, and little ones, from the discomfort and probable ruin caused by unfair laws, they should adopt certain theories of government, the party that practises the injustice towards them, and perseveres in refusing redress, is responsible before God and the country for the consequences that may ensue.

In the conflict of interests, and amidst the confusion and uproar which result, the people are bewildered, and, day after day, sink into lower depths, and feel the increasing weight of burden without knowing under whose feet they are trampled down.

In times of religious persecution ~~or~~ political vio-

lence, when fires have consumed victims at the stake, or the scaffolds have been red with the blood of patriots, it has been the practice of those who commanded the executions, to cause drums to be beaten and shouts to be raised, to prevent the shrieks and cries from being heard, or to hush the last words of the dying patriot from rousing the feelings of his assembled countrymen. So it is with political parties in more peaceable times, when the people demand justice, and discuss the questions which most interest them. Their uproar and noise are raised, to distract attention from the main subjects ; and in the halls of the legislature, hollow men are made to utter sounds, or individuals, who imitate grooms and gamekeepers, raise shouts and indecent cries to silence men whose arguments in favour of relief to the people cannot be answered. The noisy declamations in the senate, and the daily wagon-loads of newspaper discussion by party writers, are intended to drown the voice of pity, or to smother the cry of distress. The men who, in the senate filled with the ranks of party, stand up to plead a nation's wrongs, must have "their tongue in the thunder's mouth," to be heard above the clamour raised to hush the victims.

This is not the place to describe the tactics of British party-strife, but it is necessary to refer to the attempts which are at present making to give to the country the appearance of a struggle between the landed interest, and the manufacturing, commercial interest, for political influence or ascendancy ; or to throw on machinery, and its uses, and its employers, the onus or responsibility of the distresses of the country ; or to utter economical jargon on joint-stock banks, and their effects on the monetary system and the encouragement of speculation. A great mass of such argument is the ruffle of the drums, to drown the cries of the wounded and the groans of the dying !

Let the people of Great Britain and Ireland, in the calm exercise of their common sense, bear in mind the following facts and statements.

The party or class of persons called the landed interest, have legislated for, and governed this country since the Revolution of 1688 ; and it is only within these twelve years that the manufacturing interest of Manchester and other places has been represented at all in the legislature. The laws, which the manufacturing classes and the vast ma-

jority of the inhabitants of this country complain of, were enacted long before the date of the Reform of Parliament. The very laws, for the encouragement of cotton-spinning and other operations by machinery, were enacted by the landed interest, and if this cotton-working machinery and other sorts of machinery be hurtful to this country, the landed law-givers are responsible for the consequences.

With regard to machinery interfering with manual labour—will persons have the goodness to think for one minute, and decide whether the race or class of labourers, called “*cotton-spinners*,” rose up *before* or *after* the introduction and use of cotton-spinning machines. The machinery called into demand—or into existence, if you will—the class of cotton-spinning labourers; and so it will be found with the persons employed in every other sort of machinery. On the first invention and use of a new machine, there may be a derangement or transition of labourers from one employment to another, but such is only temporary or local. What will be said of the machinery by which the scrawl of an author is converted into a printed book, such as this? The most useful and intelligent class of labourers em-

ployed on it, were not known in society, as a body, before the invention of the printing-press.* The party opposed to machinery, must wage war against the *principle* of it, and not against the mere materials of wood and iron, and it would be well that they at once settled the question by breaking their own heads on the printing-press.

“Machinery does not impair the fund out of which industry is supported, neither does it lessen the amount of industry, but only alters the distribution of it, and makes it more productive than before.” †

The party, who ruffle the drums of political strife, strike up, that this country is suffering under the effects of *over-production*, and yet they will find,

* For the history of this most valuable of all arts, I must refer to “*A Dictionary of Printers and Printing, with the Progress of Literature, Ancient and Modern, by C. H. Temperley.*” This is a work of the research and labour of many years. The author of it, in a note to his preface, informs his readers, that after having served his country, and obtained his discharge from the 33d Regiment, for wounds received at the Battle of Waterloo, he applied himself to the profession of a letter-press printer; and, with the enthusiasm of a man eager for knowledge, compiled a work which contains nearly a thousand closely-printed pages, full of interesting historical and biographical knowledge, relative to the art of Printing, and subjects connected with it.

† Dr. Chalmers’ “Political Economy: On Machinery.”

that *stocking-weavers cannot afford to wear stockings!* But no beat of drum will drown the fearful fact, that this unhappy class of labourers, and all others earning about ten shillings a week, pay in direct and indirect taxation on their food, *fifty per cent* of their hard-won wages! This is a fact demonstrated in this work. Another fact is established by the Gazette, that on the fifteenth of this present month, the duty on foreign wheat imported into this country, was twenty shillings a quarter, equal to *forty-six and a half per cent on the market-price of that necessary of life!* The duty on wheat and other farinaceous grain varies in its rate, but the fact has been demonstrated, that the taxes on corn have the effect of increasing the rents of land from 20 to 25 per cent: and another fact has been proved that a Duke, with an income from land to the amount of one hundred thousand pounds, receives in that sum a bonus, about four times the amount of all the taxes, direct and indirect, which he contributes to the support of the government and institutions of the country!

These few facts and figures give the key to the secret of the whole system of British fiscal arrange-

ments, and to the apparently complicated system of British politics.

Our whole system is founded on principles impolitic, unmanly, and unsoldierly. The impolicy consists in resting the revenue of a great empire on such a variable and uncertain source as consumption ; it is unmanly, by laying on the poor and weak what ought to be borne by the wealthy and strong ; it is unsoldierly, as it breaks the law, and disregards the etiquette of extreme danger. Nelson on the wreck, or Wellington in the siege, would have divided the weevil'd biscuit with the cook's mate, or the ration of brown bread and horseflesh with the common soldier. And why should it be different in aristocratic legislation ! Is a people to perish, on the discussion of the duty on a bushel of wheat ? or to pass through the flames of revolution, to obtain fair play and common justice ?

5, UPPER HARLEY STREET,
22nd April, 1843.

The Author of these pages cannot resist the opportunity of alluding to the melancholy event of the other day, the loss of the "Solway" steam-ship, and of recording the noble conduct of Captain Duncan, who in his death has done a heroic service to his country, by an example to all British seamen and soldiers to stand and sink with their vessels, or perish on their posts when duty demands the sacrifice.

Here was a man of the peaceful profession of the commercial seaman, and free from the excitement of battle and its emulations, calmly standing on the deck of his sinking vessel with the water up to his middle, and with active exertions and under the anxiety and responsibility of a brave man hurrying women and children into the boats: and as the water rose upon him, deliberately getting up on a higher stand, and giving his last commands to his sailors to save themselves in the rigging. Perhaps in the annals of danger there is scarcely to be found a picture of more calmness, humanity, and gallantry than exhibited by Captain Duncan, as described by the surviving officers and passengers of his vessel.

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THE
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BOOK I.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

ANALOGIES FROM THE INFERIOR ANIMALS, USEFUL TO MAN IN HIS SOCIAL
CONDITION.—THE INFERIOR ANIMALS LIVE, AND LET LIVE.

It might have pleased the Almighty Creator to have caused the sentient beings that he placed on the earth, to derive the nourishment for their bodies from particles of matter inhaled along with the breath of life. But this arrangement would have altered the nature, pursuits, and character of the creatures thus sustained, and have made them altogether different from what they are under the existing system. Their bodies are furnished with organs to convey into them food produced in the earth and water, and they are preserved and strengthened by means of substances daily incorporated. The necessity of providing daily food stimulates to active exertion every race of animals, from the elephant to the ant, and from the sprat to the whale; and each in its respective sphere obeys the

law of self-preservation. It has been adduced, as an instance of the benevolence of the Creating Mind, that the necessity to which the animal is thus exposed, is followed by great enjoyment in the act of satisfying the appetite. The pleasure that animals receive in the process of feeding is obvious to every person; the ever-eating cow in the act of rumination—the sheep nibbling the grass—the deer browsing in the forest—the rabbit munching its blade—and the horse over its heap of corn, are objects of quiet enjoyment. The clucking hen appears in an extacy of delight as she scrapes the ground, and gathers the grain for her joyous brood of chickens and herself—the honest household dog lying at the door with a bone between his paws, is the very picture of contentment;* but the energy of delight in the enjoyment of food is to be witnessed in the fierce carnivorous animals—the lion, or the tiger, or the wolf, seen in his iron-barred den, inspires terror in the spectator, by the very fierceness of his pleasure. All animals dislike to be disturbed while eating; but the carnivorous species are excited to a furious state by any attempt to deprive them of their food. This is a principle of animal nature which appears to be very much overlooked in human legislation.

There is, among the various races of animals, by their members, in their search of food, a strict adherence to the principle of “live and let live.” It is true that it is decreed that one species of animals shall live upon the bodies of another sort; this strikes our senses as an evil permitted in the physical world; but the cruelty is more apparent than real: for the irrational animals have not the faculty

* The epithet “honest” is here applied, as a well-educated domestic dog never steals.

of looking before and after, and consequently their terror of death is only felt in the pain of dying; and perhaps they suffer less agony by being devoured than by the lingering decay from hunger or disease. "A hare, notwithstanding the number of its dangers and enemies, is as playful an animal as any other."*

Although the lion and the wolf fall on and devour the ox and the sheep, still each lion and each wolf pursues his game unmolested by his fellows. It does not appear that there is any disposition, still less any power, in any one lion to appropriate to himself a herd of cattle, and to keep others of his race from touching the prey. So it is through all the races of wild animals. The finny nations, as they migrate through the ocean from pole to pole, preserve order in their progress. Among the herbivorous and gregarious animals, what a friendly feeling exists in their wanderings in the wilderness or the field in quest of their daily subsistence!—each pursues his course undisturbed by his neighbour, and there is a social harmony in the herd or the flock, which it would be well for a nobler being to imitate. This harmony is, however, sometimes broken; but the quarrels which arise, have not for their object the exclusion of the weak and the old from the pastures of the common herd, but they have their origin in the passions of love, jealousy, or revenge, which, either in animal or human nature, disturb the social system.

A proverb or simile, current in the English language, would appear to make an exception to this disposition to "live and let live," of an animal that has been expressively denominated the companion of man. Can it be possible that evil communications have corrupted the faithful creature, or that its name has been used to carry off from its

* Paley.

protector the imputation of selfishly engrossing an article, and keeping all others from the enjoyment of it? Surely, the satirist of human nature, in choosing an illustration of his views, selected the case of an aged or infirm dog, coiled up in a corner where he considered himself free from intrusion, and therefore naturally became irritated by the patient horse approaching his food.

It is due to the character of the dog to clear it from the imputed snarlish disposition, described in a sentiment more truly applied to man in his grasping appropriation of the surface of the earth. No! all races of animals on the earth and in the waters, in their respective communities, follow the instinct of their nature, and live in harmony while in search of their subsistence; and, in proportion to the abundance of their food, they increase in numbers, and improve in condition.

Hunger first excites and infuriates the wild animals, but afterwards tames their temper. Man, the master and tyrant of this earth, thus subdues them to his purposes; the domestic animals become his servants and companions. "The ass knows his master's crib," and "the cow chews her cud ayont the hallan."

Before concluding this part of the subject, I will dispose of an argument in support of despotic power among men; drawn from the habits of inferior animals. It has been stated that nature designed that mankind should be under the rule or control of one individual possessed of arbitrary power; and that we perceive this principle in operation among the herds, the flocks, and the studs of animals grazing in the fields, or roaming through the forests. Certain it is, that the fiercest bull, the strongest ram, or the swiftest horse, is to be seen generally in the front of the multitude in moving from pasture to pasture.

The martial-looking migration of a flock of wild ducks *appears*, to the eye of a beholder, to be directed by a leader that wings the way to the distant lake or marsh, and the stately pace of the gander, at the head of his fellows as they stalk over the common, conveys the idea of aristocratic authority over the hissing flock;—but in this there is a great delusion : for the solemn-looking goose is no more the leader, in the proper sense of the word, than the drum-major, strutting stiff and erect in the front of his band, is the commander of the regiment.

When a cow, or a ewe, drops its calf or its lamb in the field, some favourable circumstance, perhaps, gives to the new-born creature an advantage which the young, born of other mothers at the same time, do not enjoy ; this circumstance may be independent of any original better health or superior strength of the parents. Accident may cast the birth in a spot where there is a greater abundance of pasture, or a warmer and more sheltered part of the field may bring quicker to maturity the new-born animal. The advantage thus gained at the birth, will be retained by the animal as it grows up, and will enable it to keep the lead and secure the *first* pickings of the herbage as it moves along in the field. Hence the preservation and increase of its vigour, and hence the solution of the secret of leaders, or despots, among the inferior animals.—“The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands.”*

When any race of animals are let alone, and not disturbed in the search of food and pursuit of happiness, they will increase in numbers, and spread to the full extent of the capabilities afforded by nature. The race of sparrows, that now are found in all the countries of Europe,

must have descended from the few pairs that flew out of the ark; and so on with all other animals.

But, man steps forward, and asserts his sway—the wild beasts flee from his approach, and retire farther into the wilderness, and, in the course of time, perish from the land : a wolf in a state of nature is not now to be found on the British islands. The tameable, or domestic animals, would have shared the same fate with the wild ones, had it not been for their usefulness. The horse is caught by the human biped—is tamed through food—a bridle is put into his mouth—and the proudest of all animals bends his neck to the hand of man.

CHAP. II.

FOOD IS POWER.

ARISTOCRATIC DOMINION AND SACERDOTAL INFLUENCE REST ENTIRELY OR PARTLY, ON THE CONTROL OF THE SUBSISTENCE OF THEIR VASSALS AND VOTARIES.

MAN is endowed with higher powers, for good or evil, than the animals born only to consume the fruits of the earth, and, in his social state, has, through the bad part of his nature, in all his career, striven to acquire, maintain, and extend his power over the fellows of his own race. Man subdues and rules his fellow-man through the mouth, like the horse. The idiom of language confirms this idea, as we say "to curb a people or a nation," and "to bridle an ambitious man." History is to be blamed, if, in the course of these observations, man should appear too much in the character either of the enslaved or the enslaver.

The soil is the source whence food, and everything that conduces to the enjoyment of life, is derived; and, in the occupation of the earth's surface, there is a striking contrast between the struggles, the violence, and fraud of men, and the quiet migrations and settlements of the irrational animals.

Man knows that food is the immediate and continued necessity of his nature, and by securing to himself the source of an abundant supply, he augments his own enjoyments,

and possesses the means of controlling other men destitute of similar advantages. One man who can withhold, for forty-eight hours, the food of another man, or of a thousand, or a million of men, retains the one man or the million under his subjection. This is the grand secret of society as unfolded in history down through the long period of six thousand years. Man controls his fellow-man by restraining or keeping back his subsistence.* On this principle is founded power of every kind—military despotism, oligarchical dominion, and, to a great degree, sacerdotal influence over the bodies and minds of men. On it, Nimrod established the first great empire on earth, and in the present day it is developed to a fearful extent, in the usurpation of the British aristocratic power over the subsistence and the industry of a great nation. It is not easily detected on reading the florid pages of general or national history. In early ages, poets were generally the historians or annalists of their times; and they were either not aware of the moving springs of action in men, or they followed the

* At the outstart it may be proper to meet an objection which appears to rest on the definition and description of Power given here. It may perhaps be said, that the definition will apply to the authority of a parent over his children, or to that of a master over his domestic servants, as well as to the power of a government over its subjects. Unnatural parents and cruel masters may go great lengths to starve their children and dependents, but all these classes are themselves subject to the supreme authority of the government, and the laws regulate the connection between them. The natural relation between parent and child does not supersede the civil law; and the connection between master and servant is a contract, which the latter can compel the former to fulfil. In a country there are many masters and the servant if not pleased with one can remove to another; but within the same boundaries there cannot exist contemporaneously two governments executing one law.

A government will not brook a rival a country is in a state of revolution or anarchy, when two powers claim the control of the subsistence of its inhabitants.

bent of their own genius in describing the picturesque and romantic incidents of wars and revolutions. Regular historians are commonly the companions or the protégés of the men possessed of power, and their narrations are rather the accounts of the actions of their patrons, than statements of the effects of those actions on the great mass of the people among whom they take place. History is almost exclusively filled with the lives and doings of princes—the changes of dynasties—and the proceedings of warriors; but these are descriptions of the parties who hold in their hands the power over subsistence, or narratives of the struggles among a few men to gain possession of that power.

In barbarous ages, the lands or the means of subsistence of a people are invaded, and seized with open violence, by the invaders, who again are controlled in the division of the conquered territory by their own leaders. The irruption of the northern barbarians into the south of Europe, and the conquest and seizure of the lands of England by William the Conqueror, may be adduced as instances of unmitigated violence used in the control of subsistence.

In the seizure and occupation of the waste-lands, as practised in the modern system of colonization, we have the principle in full vigour. Throughout America, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand, we behold a struggle going on among men to seize the soil and to prevent others from encroaching on it. The miserable native inhabitants are actually crushed, or extirpated, in the scramble of the new race of invaders; but a semblance of decency is preserved, by throwing down to the savages the smallest piece of money as the price of their lands, and when the seizure is completed, the invaders turn round to the fellows of their

own race, and demand for the same lands an enormous price for an acre.*

In modern times, the governments of civilized countries exercise their power over subsistence, by laws of restriction, prohibition, monopoly, and by TAXATION, in all its forms of insidious, indirect impost, and of direct personal payment or service. Salt is the savour of life,—without which the bodies of men would become living masses of worms and corruption. It has therefore been seized by the hand of fiscal power of every country as an article of taxation, and in some countries, it is held exclusively by the government. Throughout Asia, salt may be termed one of the instruments of despotism. In France, before its great revolution, salt was a government monopoly, and formed a productive source of its revenue; and, at present, the duties on salt appear considerable items in the national accounts of that country, and also of Spain.† It is only

* Question by Committee of House of Lords, April and May, 1838. N.B.
“Lord Durham’s Company probably did not give for the million of acres more than forty or fifty pounds sterling?”

Answer by the Hon. F. Baring—“Probably not; they would give a certain number of muskets or blankets.”

Evidence of John Ward, Secretary to the New Zealand Company—given before Committee of House of Commons, 17th July, 1840

“Land secured, about twenty millions of acres. Cost about £17,000. The Company paid altogether £45,000 for land in different parts of New Zealand.” Answer, No. 645—“The cost appears to be about a half-penny an acre.”

In the London newspapers of January, 1842, the Court of Directors of the New Zealand Company advertised their lands, on sale, at 30 shillings an acre!

† “TAXES IN PRUSSIA.—The reduction of the taxes is estimated at 2,000,000 of Prussian dollars, of which 1,900,000 are to be allocated to diminish the price of salt, and so relieve the indigent classes.” Extract from *The Times* of Dec. 9, 1842.

twenty years since the taxes on salt in Great Britain were abolished; the duty was fifteen shillings a bushel, equal to about fifteen hundred per cent. on the prime cost of the article. But although this monstrous tax was abolished, that on bread was retained, and still exists in a Christian land!

Among the more energetic races of savages, the desire to appropriate the food of their enemies is carried to an extraordinary height. The ancient Scythians drank the blood of the first enemy they slew. Among the ancient nations of Central America, the bodies of prisoners taken in war were claimed by the officers or soldiers who captured them, and were dressed and served up at an entertainment of friends, who assembled after the prisoners had been first sacrificed to their gods. Savages believe, that by eating the bodies, they acquire the courage and other martial virtues of their enemies. So strong is the digestion, and so fell the revenge, of the New Zealanders, that they cook the bodies of their enemies, and serve them at the feast made to celebrate the victory. In ancient times, and perhaps in the present day, in Eastern countries, the delivery of earth and water was the symbol or token of submission of one people to another; the elements of earth and water represented the subsistence of the people who came under the yoke.

Despotism and famine are allied, or rather they are cause and effect. The despotism throughout Asia is terrible, and, comparing the present with the past, appears destined to be perpetual, in the countries where the inhabitants are fixed to the soil; but in the pastoral regions of Arabia, Persia, and Tartary, there exists a wild personal independence. It would be foreign to the design of this work, to enter into a disquisition on the state of the various races

that people Asia, and it will be sufficient merely to allude to one cause of the stern despotism, that grinds to the earth a nation of slaves. In the agricultural districts the soil perhaps is fertile, and under the sun, between the 30th and 45th degrees of north latitude, will produce every article of food required for the comfort and pleasure of man; and, provided there be sufficient moisture, in such abundance as would soon enable every man to obtain his subsistence, independent of the efforts of power. But, unfortunately, in those regions, from some meteorological causes, there occur periodically long and severe droughts, during which the earth yields no fruits; and from the days of Abraham and of Joseph, the inhabitants have alternated between devastations of famine, and the pressure of the most cruel despotism. In those times of physical calamity, the unhappy people must either perish of hunger, or be dependent for a precarious existence on the bounty of government. The inhabitants thus become debtors and slaves, and hence one of the sources of the misery in those countries. There has been only one Joseph in the whole history of mankind, and he was raised by the Almighty to be the preserver and benefactor of many nations

The present state of Egypt, Syria, Arabia, and the countries farther to the eastward, is familiarly known to every reader of travels. The accounts of all travellers agree in describing a wretched state of society there; and, thanks to steam, a view of Eastern despotism can now be taken in its strongest hold; but, before the era of steam, many enterprising and enlightened travellers explored the East, and at great personal risk, communicated to Europe much information concerning the countries they visited. Burckhardt, in his account of Arabia, gives some particulars which elucidate the system of Eastern taxation of food, leading to an

oppression of the most terrible nature ; he simply described the state of matters as they existed when he was in Arabia, without a view to the support of any system of political economy ; and, as he wrote in the year 1814, he is perfectly innocent of any intentional allusion to the British system of taxation of food. He says : “ The corn-trade was formerly in the hands of individuals, and the Sherif Ghalib also speculated in it ; but at present (1814) Mohammed Ali Pasha has taken it entirely into his own hands, and none is sold either at Suez or Cossier to private persons—every grain being shipped on account of the Pasha. This is likewise the case with all other provisions, as rice, butter, biscuits, and onions, of which large quantities are imported. At the time of my residence in Hedjaz, this country not producing a sufficiency, the Pasha sold the grain at Djiddah for the price of from 130 to 160 piastres per ‘ardeb,’ and every other provision in proportion : the corn cost him 12 piastres by the ardeb in Upper Egypt, and including the expense of carriage from Guana to Cossier, and freight thence to Djiddah, 25 to 30 piastres. This enormous profit was alone sufficient to defray his expenses in carrying on the Wahaby war ; but it was ill-calculated to conciliate the good will of the people. His partisans, however, excused him, by alleging that *in keeping grain at high prices, he secured the Bedouins of the Hedjaz in his interest, as they depend upon Mecca and Djiddah for provisions, and they were thus compelled to enter into his service, and receive his pay, to ESCAPE STARVATION.*”

Coffee is an absolute necessary of life in all Eastern countries, and is indeed the principal food of the inhabitants, in Arabia ; “ the poorest labourer never takes less than three or four cups a day : ”—but the Pasha of Egypt strictly prohibited the importation of West India Coffee

into his dominions, and no doubt justified such a law on the necessity to give protection to "*native-grown coffee*," meaning coffee from his own lands. He thus secured a monopoly, and a monopolist's price, for the three or four cups of coffee consumed by his poorest labourers. We have thus laid bare by Burckhardt, the principle on which Eastern despotism is based—the principle of the English corn-laws is precisely similar;—and we have thus the Arab of the Hedjaz, and the cotton-spinner of Manchester, compelled to buy grain at high prices *to escape starvation*.

Of all the fortified sea-ports on the globe, Acre on the coast of Syria, has been perhaps the most celebrated, both in ancient and modern times. Before the invasion of the Israelites, it was a place of great importance, and continued so through all the vicissitudes of history down to the termination of the Crusades. It was the last place held out by the Christians, the remnant of whom perished heroically in the defence of it. In the present century, twice has the British name been distinguished there; once by its successful defence against the conqueror of Europe, and again by its surrender to the British fleet anchored under its formidable batteries. The secret of this importance is explained by an impartial modern traveller in these words: "Acre, being the port by which all the rice, the staple food of the people, enters the country, the possessor of that place can produce a famine through the whole land."*

Several definitions have been given of the word Power:—it has been said, that "knowledge is power," and that "money is power." Knowledge may be termed moral power, and money may be denominated physical power. But if money, or capital, be considered as power, and analyzed, it will be

* Illustrations of the Holy Land, by F. Arundale, 1837, page 106.

found to reduce itself into subsistence or food,—for, as money is the universal representative of property, it can draw to itself, by exchange, the food of man, and thereby give to the possessor an effective hold of life itself. No other substance will impart such strength, and therefore Food is Power.

The exercise of power, or the influence of government—that is to say, the effect of the authority of one or of a small number of persons over a multitude, and even over an entire people, is one of the most singular things in the moral nature of man. We are so habituated to the effect, that we lose sight of its singularity, and in enlightened societies the laws are obeyed on conviction of their necessity, and from a sense of duty, independent of the dread of punishment for disobedience of them. But the great mass of mankind submit to be ruled under a species of fascination, analogous to an optical illusion. Each individual of the community thinks he perceives the eye of the executive magistrate, as embodying the law, directed towards himself, and, as he is conscious of his perfect insignificance, when compared with the elevation and imposing front of the public authority, he bends submissive. A crowd of a hundred or more men, perhaps all stout and resolute individuals, will be kept at bay, or even made to run off, by one man with a loaded musket directed towards them: one minute for reflection, and another for concert, would suffice to overpower the armed man; but in the panic, each one imagines that the musket is pointed at him, and does not consider that he is only one of a hundred, and therefore the chance is ninety-nine to one that he will not be hit. A practised orator, in a large assembly, will so turn his face as to make each of his auditors fancy that his eye is more particularly directed towards him: in this case the self-love of the hearer is

gratified with the thought that so much eloquence should be uttered for his special instruction and delight. These two illustrations will serve to give some idea of the operation and effect of the power of government on the mind and conduct of the governed. But on the other hand, the steady eye of a people fixed upon the holders of the power of the state, has a wonderful effect. A people have only to agree among themselves what will be for their advantage, and be united in their demands, and the very expression of their looks is quite sufficient. There was no mistaking the meaning expressed in the eye of the British people, in the year 1832. It made the hand of power tremble, and the consequence was the concession to the national demand of a more direct control over the measures of government.

As it is maintained, that the control of subsistence constitutes political power, it follows that the glare of a famished people must be terrible to the possessors of that power. This being admitted, it will be for the interest of governments, and all bodies possessed of power, to shape their measures, so that the great mass of the community shall not feel in their personal circumstances, the immediate pressure of the power that rules them. There is a short-sightedness in a too selfish principle of government, which defeats its own object. There is an inquietude in the perseverance in acts of injustice, which has always been distressing and dangerous to government. Governments are composed of men, and must be appealed to through the feelings of men, and state maxims and courtly influence must in the long-run give way to humanity. With governments as with individuals, justice, as well as honesty, ought to be the best policy.

In the observations which follow, deduced from various historical instances, an attempt is made to support the

position, that political power, whether exercised by a monarch or an oligarchy, and sacerdotal influence, are founded on a control of the subsistence of the vassals, and votaries.

When the Israelites first demanded to have a king to rule over them, the consequences were plainly told,—“And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. He will take the tenth of your sheep; and ye shall be his servants.” It would appear that bread, as a symbol of regal power, was put into the hand of Saul, the first king of the Jewish nation—for after Samuel had anointed him king, under the direction of God, he instructed him to proceed to his government, and on the way he would meet three men, who, said the prophet, “will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of bread, which thou shalt receive of their hands.”*

About this time, however, they did require a king, “to go before them, and fight their battles.” Never were a people so sunk in slavery, as the Jews were at this period of their history: their very existence was at the mercy of their enemies the Philistines. “Now, there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel, for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears; but all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his spear, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock.” “So it came to pass, in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan; but with Saul, and with Jonathan his son, was there found.” It would appear from this account, that the despotism under which they groaned was of the severest nature, for they were not only deprived of arms, but every mouthful of their food was under the control of their tyrants, who would allow only on

* 1 Samuel

sufferance their agricultural instruments to be sharpened or repaired. In the Roman history, shortly after the expulsion of Tarquin, there occurs a parallel remarkably similar to this state of the Jews,—“The treaty with Porsenna prohibited the Romans from all use whatever of iron except in agriculture.”*

The Jews were indeed in a miserable plight: they were first exposed to priestly extortions—they were ground down by their enemies the Philistines—and in order to get out of their embarrassments, they submitted to a king, who took “their daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers.” The following is a graphic account of sacerdotal proceedings some years previous to the election of Saul to the throne of Israel:—“And the priest’s custom with the people was, that, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest’s servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand; and he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up, the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh, unto all the Israelites that came thither. Also, before they burnt the fat, the priest’s servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw. And if any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and then take as much as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, Nay; but thou shalt give it me now;—and if not, I will take it by force.”†
Three thousand years have elapsed, since the case of rapacity described above, and during that long period, the weakness and credulity of mankind have been but too frequently imposed upon by the demand—“but thou shalt give it me now, and if not I will take it by force.” At times,

* Niebuhr’s Rome.

† 1 Samuel.

the people have been so abased, and priestly dominion in union with secular power has been so great, that multitudes "have come and crouched to it for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and have said—Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread."*

The history of every ancient people will furnish examples of conquest over the means of subsistence, and of the establishment of despotic power.

After a war of twenty years between Sparta and Messene, in Greece, the latter was brought under complete subjection. No direct tribute was imposed by Sparta, on the conquered people, but the terms demanded of them were, that one-half of the corn raised by the Messenians should be carried to the Spartan market; and, by way of homage, the Messenian men and women were bound to attend in mourning the funerals of Spartan kings, and chief citizens. At first, the Spartans treated the conquered people with lenity, but, as soon as they got their necks completely under the yoke by having secured their food, they began to insult them, and became insolent and overbearing, imposed heavy taxes on them, and gave over the unhappy Messenians to the avarice of the collectors, who committed the greatest outrages. Unmitigated tyranny was exercised; but at length, in this state of misery, a deliverer appeared. Aristomenes whispered to his degraded countrymen, and roused them to vengeance, and, after the first successes over the Spartans, was saluted king by his excited and grateful compatriots.

After a series of successes and defeats, Aristomenes was shut up with the remains of his army in fort Ira, where he was besieged for eleven years. He sallied out, was routed, and after many extraordinary escapes from destruction, he again

* 1 Samuel.

appeared in arms against his enemies, who, in superior force, overpowered him and the remnant of his gallant band. The leader, and the last of his followers, were thrown into a deep and dark cavern, there to perish miserably of broken bones and hunger.—All, except Aristomenes, died.

A fox entered the den, to feed on the dead bodies lying partly on and around the courageous chief, who seized the hind leg of the animal as it was moving off, and by keeping hold of it, as it tried to escape, he discovered the hole by which it had entered the cavern, and again found himself freed from darkness and death. He repaired to where the last of his countrymen and countrywomen held out, besieged by the Spartans, and at length had the glory to deliver them, and lead them safely out of reach of the enemy. This finished the second Messenian war.

There are two states of society of a very opposite nature, which have always been favourable to personal and political liberty : the first is the pure pastoral state—and the second, the artificial and refined condition of a commercial people. Each preserves its freedom and independence by the command which it retains over its means of subsistence. It has always been found impossible by any foreign power to control the food of a pastoral race of people : the sheep, the cattle, the goats, and camels, which afford the means of living, are moveable, and can be led into the glens of the mountains, or the recesses of the desert, on the first approach of an enemy. The owners, with their swords and spears, hover around and bid defiance to the best appointed armies, led on by the most celebrated warriors. The answer made by the Scythian to Darius, on his invasion of Scythia, explains the tactics of pastoral tribes. “It is not my disposition, O Persian ! to fly from

any man through fear : neither do I now fly from you. My present conduct differs not at all from that which I pursue in a state of peace. Why I do not contend with you in the open field, I will explain : we have no inhabited towns nor cultivated lands, of which we can fear your invasion or your plunder, and have therefore no occasion to engage with you precipitately : but we have the sepulchres of our fathers ; these you may discover, and if you endeavour to injure them, you shall soon know how far we are able or willing to resist you ; till then, we will not meet you in battle. Remember farther, that I acknowledge no master or superior but Jupiter. Instead of the presents which you require of earth and water, I will send you such as you deserve ; and in return for your calling yourself my master, I only bid you weep.”*

The pastoral Arabians have preserved an indomitable independence since the days of Ishmael. All the power of France has not been able in twelve years to penetrate beyond a few miles into the African pastoral regions.—And it is to be feared that the treacherous Affghans will escape the vengeance of Britain by simply putting themselves and flocks out of reach of her arms : we cannot touch their food.

But though pastoral tribes and nations are unconquerable by civilized people, they have themselves been the subduers of more enlightened but more enervated races. The ancient Tartars overran and conquered the greater part of southern and eastern Asia ; the Turkomans, Western Asia ; and the Saracen Arabs, a great part of the north of Africa, and the south of Europe. The movements of such people are armed migrations of nations carrying their food in the shape of live cattle, and seizing as they proceed the subsistence of the conquered people.

* Beloe's Herodotus

A people under an enlightened commercial system enjoy a great degree of civil and political liberty; hence the jealousy entertained of that state by aristocratic and despotic power. The intelligence, activity, and union of a commercial people are formidable to power; their connections with foreign countries, their ships, their harbours, and storehouses, enable them to supply their wants, and to place their supplies out of reach of danger: they possess a complete command over their own subsistence, and, consequently, are independent. But the commercial principle is apt to degenerate into monopoly; and in some of the Italian states, oligarchies of the most tyrannical and inquisitorial character were seen to spring out of it. The Hanseatic league of towns, in the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, forms a memorable instance of how far commerce could be carried, not only to establish the independence of a people, but to become formidable to the most powerful governments of Europe. In the Spanish war, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, Sir Francis Drake found in the river Tagus sixty ships loaded for the Hanseatic towns, with corn, which he took out as contraband, and thus made a blow at the league by controlling its food. Other European governments took umbrage at it, and at length, from about eighty cities, the league was reduced to four, and in the present day is entirely dissolved, as each city that formerly belonged to it now acts on its own account, and forms treaties with foreign governments.

Landed Aristocracies sneer at the wealth and greatness derived from commerce, and point with exultation to the fishing-rock of modern Tyre, to the slime that mantles on the canals of Venice, or to the ruins of commercial depôts spread over the earth, as standing monuments of the unstable nature of property thus acquired. But, on the other side,

turn the eye to the most favoured spots of the ancient world, regions yet of primeval fertility of soil; and what do we behold? The alluvial plains of the Euphrates and the Tigris, once covered with a thousand cities, are now the haunts of a few wretched tribes of plundering Arabs! The Nile still pours its perennial flood over a valley covered with ruins, to which the miserable slaves who crawl among them, look up as the work of magicians. The fertile plains once seized by the proud Roman patricians, are now converted into marshes, whence exhale pestilence and death.

These remarks will serve to convey the great truths, that laws founded on principles to support a small portion of the inhabitants of the country at the expense of the rest, eventually lead to the ruin of all classes—and that institutions and governments resting on just principles, for the general welfare of a people, will become as durable as the ground which sustains every thing, whether within the walls of Hamburg, or on the soil of Egypt.

This is the proper place to observe, that in all systems of religion, except in the religion of Christ, the prohibition or restriction of articles of food has been one great means of their support. Moses was zoologically precise in his description of beasts, fishes, and birds, which were to be eaten, or to be avoided, as food. Several reasons have been assigned for the great care bestowed on this section of his laws—the chief of which, no doubt, was, to mark the Jews as a people distinguished from all others; and another, to hold up the absurd and contemptible nature of the idolatry of the Egyptians and other nations, by being enjoined to eat the very animals that were actually worshipped as gods by those people. Christianity being a pure faith, addressed to man as a moral and intellectual being, is independent of all such extraneous aids: it offers

perfect freedom, and we are told that "whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience' sake : for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof."*

In the corrupt state of Christianity during the dark ages, the church almost starved its votaries into faith, and, in proportion to the degree of fanaticism was the strictness of abstinence from food.† During the wars of the crusades, the fasts were observed by the Christians with such superstitious rigour, "that children at the breast were not allowed the usual nourishment, and the herds of cattle were driven from their pastures."‡

In the middle of the fifteenth century, the Pope prohibited Christians and Jews from eating together; which is similar to the policy prescribed by Pharaoh, who prohibited the Egyptians from eating bread with the Hebrews.§

When the Scots, in the time of Cromwell, refused to keep fasts by order of the civil magistrate, there was a meaning in the refusal much deeper than the circumstance appeared to indicate.

Among a rude and unenlightened people, the founders and maintainers of idolatrous worship, with a deep knowledge of human nature, excited the fears and hopes of their ignorant countrymen, and builded thereon a system of spiritual despotism and temporal power. The tricks by which they imposed on the senses of the credulous devotees, inspiring them with superstitious awe, have been discovered by travellers on examining the ruins of ancient temples.

* 1 Cor. x. 25

† It was asked by the Jews, of the Author of Christianity, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?" Matthew ix. 14.

‡ Mill's History of the Crusades.

§ Genesis xliii. 32

The influence of the priesthood of ancient Egypt must have been overpowering both on the government and the people, as their lands were exempted from the tax imposed as redemption after the great famine.

Among the various causes which contributed to the support, for so many ages, of the priestly dominion of ancient Egypt and Rome,—superstitions so terrible—may be ranked the agrarian influence acquired by the priests and augurs, in their capacity as sacred land-surveyors and measurers.

It is commonly believed that in Egypt the art of surveying and dividing lands was first perfected in order to adjust the boundaries of property after the annual overflowing of the Nile; and as the priests were the possessors of all the knowledge extant, they naturally were referred to as arbiters in disputed cases of limits. The ancient Etruscan system, from which the Romans took their principles of land-surveying, was, no doubt, borrowed from the Egyptians.

The limits fixed to fields and estates were considered sacred, and never to be altered; hence the worship of the god Terminus who presided over bounds, and hence those picturesque solemnities of crowning with flowers and garlands the stones which marked the divisions of lands. The very word "Temple," in its original meaning, was connected with the process of observation taken from the cardinal points of the heavens, in tracing the boundaries of lands. "Thus every assignment of lands, and even every sale of domain lands, acquired a religious security: it never could be resumed by the state."* The power and influence of the priesthood were thus connected with pro-

* Niebuhr's Rome.

perty in lands, the source of subsistence—hence the extent and durability of the priestly dominion.

The Druidical system of ancient Britain, the priesthood of Brahma in India, the systems of Mexican and Peruvian idolatry, the reign of superstition in ancient Greece, and, above all, the desolating influence of Mahommedanism, have astonished the world by their monstrous power.

As the Brahminical and Mahommedan religions still exist, and flourish in vigour in the present day, and as they extend their influence over countries, either under the dominion of Great Britain, or with which she has important diplomatic and commercial relations, it will be well to advert to the restriction or control of food exercised by those systems. It would appear that Brahma and Mahommed, the founders, wished to perpetuate their dominion over the minds by an effectual hold of the bodies of their followers. Besides a prohibition of certain kinds of food, frequent and severe fasts are enjoined on the votaries. Among the Brahmins no flesh is eaten, or blood shed: the cow, as among the ancient Egyptians, is deemed sacred; and milk, the produce of the venerated animal, is the most esteemed food. No bullock is suffered to be worked, if hungry or thirsty. Rice and vegetables are the only food allowed, along with ghee or butter. Some kinds of flesh and fish are permitted, but it is considered virtuous to abstain from them. Devotees may eat only once a day, and that sparingly, of rice. Their bigotry in their rules of eating is extraordinary; the division into castes preserves the system, and pride comes in aid of fanaticism; the Brahmins, or highest caste, will not eat food prepared by an inferior caste, and so on with the different orders; no man will eat or drink with another man belonging to an inferior caste; and to such an absurd length has this superstition been

carried, that in a case of shipwreck, Hindoos have preferred to perish of thirst, rather than use the water belonging to men of a lower grade. Charity and hospitality are, however, inculcated in the strongest manner, and these virtues distinguish the Indian character. A great singularity marks the religion of Brahma, and distinguishes it from all other systems: it seeks no proselytes, is tolerant, and believes that all religions are acceptable to God. It has existed two or three thousand years, and appears to rest its power on the control or proscription of food: it has impressed on the Indian character the features of passiveness, and, in all ages of its history, the inhabitants have succumbed to despotic power, generally of foreign origin.

On turning to Mahommedanism, we find a religion of quite an opposite character; it holds its votaries, in their food and drink, as firmly by the mouth, but allows greater variety, and does not prohibit animal food, except hog's flesh and several other articles out of the Mosaic list. It forms a striking contrast with Brahminism in its active and energetic character; it makes proselytes with the sword, and one of its duties is, to make war upon the infidels—that is to say, upon all people who are not of its creed: the principal duties inculcated are, to pray five times a day—to fast one month in the year—to visit Mecca once in a lifetime—to pay a tithe of property to the church—to drink no wine—and to eat no pork.

It thus appears, that by the control or proscription of food, superstition has raised its monstrous power throughout all Asia; and through the command and license of food must the same superstition be assailed and overturned; but not in choking the people by doing violence to their prejudices, but by gratifying their palates and gradually nourishing their bodies with the forbidden food.

It would require some tact, and learned management, to effect the change, but success need not be despaired of by a Government of India really actuated by a desire to improve the condition of the natives. Ridicule might be quietly brought in aid of the benevolent design; and it might be put to the common sense of this simple people, What have horned cattle to do with a creed? or, why should abstinence from hog's flesh be an article of faith?

The prejudices of a fanatical people respecting the religious prohibition of food, are strong, and must not be violently assailed. A political incendiary on one occasion tried to excite disturbances between the Mahommedan population and the British authorities in a town in India, by throwing a pig into a mosque, as if done by the English.

However, people have prejudices in favour of certain kinds of food. Every nation has its favourite dish; and in Spain, pork is almost universally used as a test to mark the true believer from the Moorish followers of Mahomet, and from the Jewish race. In Eastern countries, a species of homage is paid to the rank of an individual, or affection is displayed to his person, by a larger mess of food being placed before him at an entertainment.

The influence of diet on individual and national character has been remarked by writers on physiology, but to what extent this can be carried is not satisfactorily ascertained. It comes within every person's experience to ascertain the effects on himself of different kinds of food, and by a continuance of a certain regimen a permanent change may be produced in his system. Animal food is much more stimulating than vegetable diet, and according to the nature of the aliment, is supposed to be the disposition of the various races of men: but yet there are a thousand circumstances which work mysteriously in form-

ing the character of a people. The Scotchman on his oatmeal, the Irishman on his potato, and the Hindoo on his rice, is each a specimen of a vegetable-fed biped—but what a variety there is in the three characters! The popular belief in this country, during the war, was that one Englishman was a match for three Frenchmen in a bodily struggle, because the first ate his beef, and the other their frogs and their soup. To sum up; this may be said, that a well-fed British or Irish man, when in downright earnest in the cause which he adopts, is a very formidable character; and when the roast beef of England shall become a traditionary relic, the sceptre of power will have departed from her.

CHAP. III.

ANALYSIS OF THE ROMAN HISTORY.

PART I.

THE ANTAGONIST PRINCIPLES OF ROMAN ARISTOCRACY AND DEMOCRACY.—

THE ARISTOCRACY CONTROLLED THE PEOPLE, BY CONTROLLING THEIR MEANS OF SUBSISTENCE —THE PEOPLE REGAINED THEIR LIBERTIES AND SECURED THEIR POWER BY RECOVERING POSSESSION OF THE PUBLIC LANDS, AS THE SOURCE OF SUBSISTENCE —MILITARY DESPOTISM CRUSHED THE REPUBLIC.

THE history of the ancient Romans has been often referred to, as affording valuable lessons to modern nations. Many passages of it have been cited as examples for modern people to imitate. But considerable injury has been done to the cause of true liberty, by a partial or injudicious application of those passages. Several tragical incidents have been held out, and have excited the feelings of an ardent people with the desire, but without the preparation, for freedom. Many of the events alluded to, together with the energetic and extraordinary characters who were actors in them, are more adapted for the romance of the stage, than for the imitation or guidance of a sober people, in pursuit of a rational freedom. But, to the British people, the history of the Romans must ever be interesting, as exhibiting features similar to what their own story presents. Of all the ancient nations, the Romans had the reputation

of enjoying the greatest degree of civil and political liberty; and the same with the British in modern times.

Each nation, in its own way, exercised considerable influence upon its government, but each was oppressed by an aristocratic power, that constantly endeavoured to crush the people under the burden of its exactions; the Romans, after a struggle of five centuries, fell down, and were crushed by the imperial government; the British people have been more fortunate, as they have been preserved from abasement, by the barrier of the throne standing between them and a faction, ever active and expert in the arts of corruption. At the end of a thousand years, under a regulated monarchy, the people are more powerful and intelligent than at any former period of their history; and, in another generation, they will be able to extract the fangs from the jaws of the monster that has so long devoured their substance. In another light, the Romans cannot but be considered with interest, mixed with a degree of awe; they conquered, and held in subjection for four hundred years, the British Islands, and our ancestors were consequently the vassals of that extraordinary people for that long period of time. A people that conquered the world, will always have a strong hold on the sympathies and admiration of future ages.

The people, or nation, entitled in history the Romans, were originally formed by the union of three races or tribes, on the western coast of Italy—the Latins, Sabines, and Etrurians. During the first two centuries and a half, their government was monarchical; with a senate or council composed of the men whose age, wisdom, or valour gave them authority with their countrymen; the people themselves, in public assemblies, ratified or negatived the laws passed by the king and senate. In a small community, the

sufrages of every male adult could be easily taken ; and the fineness of the climate led the inhabitants to pass a great part of their time, both for amusement and business, in the open air. Climate possesses a powerful influence over the customs, laws, and institutions of a people.

The first king after Romulus was a blessing to the Romans. He united them, and established guilds or companies of trading burghers, which were the origin of the order of citizens ; but, at the same time, the patrician or aristocratic body cemented and extended its power. The last of the kings proved a tyrant and a curse, to both the citizens and patricians, and was expelled the country ; and the throne was overturned by the aristocratic party, in union with the people, who lent their assistance to a revolution which entirely changed the government.

A severe oligarchical power, under the name of a Republic, was established ; and the people found, that for one despot, they were pressed down by a number of tyrants. From the expulsion of Tarquin, in the 507th year before the birth of Christ, to the establishment of the Imperial power under Augustus, about the time of that event, the history of the Roman people presents an uninterrupted series of efforts, on the part of the aristocracy, to found and perpetuate their dominion, by the possession of a complete control over the subsistence of the people, and of the struggles of the people to free themselves from the intolerable yoke. The history of no other nation developes with such force the principle of political power and the control of subsistence being identical. Numa, two hundred years before the dethronement of Tarquin, had established the division of lands, gained in war, among the poorer part of the people ; and, previous to the expulsion of the tyrant, property was fixed as the basis of apportioning the taxes ;

and for that end, and for the great object of the franchise, the city of Rome was divided into four tribes or sections, and all the able bodied citizens were ranked in classes. On the valuation of the property of the classes depended the tribute, the military accoutrements, and the place assigned in the order of battle; the highest class of citizens were embodied into the cavalry. The order of knights, or the equestrian order, was entirely founded on a property-qualification; and even in the most flourishing time of the republic, it only required property to the amount of about £3,000, valued in modern sterling money, to qualify a citizen for the equestrian rank. The order of knights thus formed a monied body, between the people and the patricians, the hereditary aristocracy.

Very shortly after the banishment of Tarquin, the people found themselves exposed to the exactions of their new masters, and, in order to escape from them, abandoned the city, and retired to form another settlement. It was on this occasion that they were persuaded to come back, on hearing the application of the fable of the belly and the limbs of the body. But by this movement they gained the advantage of having certain officers, elected by themselves from their own body, to watch over and protect their interests, by possessing a veto on the proceedings of the senate. The people now made claims to property belonging to the public, but the patricians resisted them—resting their resistance on the *possession* of the property.

In consequence of the neglect of agriculture, caused by the disturbances, a severe famine ensued, and commissioners were sent to purchase corn of the neighbouring states. When a supply arrived, a dispute arose as to its distribution; the Senate claimed for itself the division of the grain, and Coriolanus, the stern and haughty leader of the aristo-

cratic party, proposed that it should be portioned to the people on no other condition than the surrender and abdication, on their parts, of the rights so lately conceded to them. It is to be observed, that the corn thus imported was purchased with the public money, and the people naturally became indignant at this attempt to cheat them, and to starve them; but their tribunes brought the author of it to trial, and sentenced him to banishment from the territory. He withdrew to the most powerful enemies of the Roman people, and lending them the aid of his military talents, roused them to invade the Roman territory, where this mean and traitorous aristocrat wreaked his vengeance, by laying waste the lands of his own countrymen. He, however, met the fate that he merited, for the Volscians, availing themselves of the treason, but despising the traitor, put the "insolent villain" to death.*

Immediately after this, began the struggles between the people and the aristocracy for the passing of the Agrarian laws, which continued to form the main features of Roman history to the end of the Republic. The question was simply to establish the right, which the people had to a share of the public lands acquired by conquest. In early times, one portion was devoted to the gods—another to the state—and a third to the citizens; but at the period referred to, the patrician order, on every extension of the Roman

* Shakspeare, who wrote for the people of every age, appeared to have had in his mind's eye the state of his own country in the year 1841-2, when he made the Roman citizens address the following observations to the Senators—"Care for us! True, indeed! They ne'er cared for us yet. Suffer us to famish, and their storehouses crammed with grain—make edicts for usury to support usurers—repeal daily any wholesome act established against the rich—and provide more piercing statutes daily to chain up and restrain the poor! If the wars eat us not up, they will; and there is all the love they bear us."—*Coriolanus, Act I Scene I.*

territory, swelled their own acquisitions, while allotments of land to the citizens were rarely and grudgingly made. It is true that colonies were established on the frontiers of conquered countries, in which the citizens were offered lands that cost them perhaps their lives to defend—while the patricians enjoyed in safety the greater portion reserved to themselves. But the people possessed an inherent energy that carried them onwards, and by the union of the several classes, they gained ground on the aristocratic order. At this epoch of their history, a remarkable person was called from his rural retirement to be invested with supreme authority. This was Cincinnatus—who left with reluctance his mattock and his plough, to assume the baton of power. He had to quell intestine commotion, and repel foreign invasion; he succeeded in both, and then retired to his farm. In times of imminent danger, the people can be ruined or saved only by one of themselves :—they are safe in their own union and confidence in each other—or they may be betrayed by some renegade from their ranks.

About this period, the people, by their intelligence, effected a great reform by the promulgation of a written body of laws, compiled into the celebrated Code of the Twelve Tables: but as a lesson to the Roman, and every other people, the ten men who had been appointed to form these laws, set themselves above all law, and usurped the most despotic powers over their countrymen, who at length were happy enough to get them expelled from Rome.

The patrician order had been so exclusive and haughty in their bearing to the great body of the people, that inter-marriages had been forbidden, but the citizens, through means of their tribunes, compelled the removal of this badge of inequality, and the law concerning marriages between

the popular and aristocratic orders was passed by the senate.

This change was in its consequences a great social and political revolution—the patricians were constrained to increased exertion in the public service, and the popular party were incited to imitate them; the latter practised frugality and industry, in order to rival the aristocrats in wealth. From this period commenced the advance of Rome to supreme power over Italy; for in war perfect union prevailed against the foreign enemy.

Tranquillity was disturbed by one Spurius Mælius, a wealthy knight, attempting to possess himself of sovereign power. During a famine he purchased all the corn that he could procure, and distributed it along with arms to the poorer classes. But his designs were discovered, and he himself was destroyed by an officer of the dictator Cincinnatus.

Fifty years after the event referred to, the Gauls under Brennus, tempted by the climate and fruits of Italy, invaded the country and sacked Rome, but were driven back and almost entirely destroyed by Camillus the Roman general, who roused the people to rebuild the city, laid waste by the barbarians. This invasion was effected by a surprise, and it put the Romans afterwards more upon their guard.

The struggles between the two great orders in the state, continued after the expulsion of the Gauls. The circumstance that gave peculiar weight to the influence exercised by the patrician body was the possession of the priestly office:—to political power was added the terrors of superstition over the minds of the people. The union of magistrate and priest was preserved to the time of the empire, and Julius Cæsar in his decrees began, “I Julius Cæsar,

imperator, and high priest, have made this decree with the approbation of the Senate.”*

The devastation of the country, and the destruction of the city of Rome, by the barbarians of Gaul, reduced the Roman people to great distress. Property was destroyed, and at this period of public calamity the rapacity and tyrannical proceedings of the aristocratic party appeared to increase with the misery of the people. Hatred, pride, and avarice leagued the patricians for mastery over the Roman citizens. The spirit of the people was sunk by the enormous weight of calamity, and it was verging into the gloom and stupor of despair.

The Roman people and the Roman name were about to be extinguished ; and in the present age, it is impossible for the mind of man to conceive what would now have been the state of the world, had the virtue and the energy of that extraordinary race not surmounted the difficulties of their situation, and enabled them to curb and depress the power of the aristocratic order.

But an intelligent people, true to themselves, who resolutely demand their rights of a domestic tyrant, or defend them against a foreign foe, need never despair ; and at this period of Roman history, two men arose, who raised their countrymen from a state of great abasement, to one of prosperity, power, and grandeur. These two men, Licinius

* Josephus—Book xiv Chap. 10.

The Christian British union of “ Church and State,” is in principle analogous with the “ union of magistrate and priest,” among the Romans. Political power and theocratic influence are centered in the same individual. The holy ‘ Father in God,’ the bishop, sits as a lay legislator, to tax the subsistence of the citizens. The agricultural labourer, who poaches a hare, has his sentence passed on him by the same individual, who perhaps read on the Sunday before, in the parish church,—“The gleanings of thy harvest thou shalt leave them unto the poor and to the stranger.”

and Servius, were tribunes of the people, who, with great strength of purpose, ability, and unconquerable perseverance, and without violence, succeeded in getting a measure passed into law, which saved their country from ruin.— This law was the famous statute known as the Licinian Rogations. It decided three most important questions. First. It diminished the political power of the aristocratic party, and increased that of the people, by dividing the consular authority equally between consuls appointed from the Patricians and Plebeians. Secondly. It struck at the root of illegal and usurped power, by reclaiming for the republic, all lands which had been violently seized and occupied by individuals of the aristocratic order; and it restored to the Roman citizens the command of subsistence, by allotting them, according to circumstances, a portion of the public lands in possession, on payment of a land-tax, of the tenth bushel from arable lands, and a fifth of the produce from plantations and vineyards: the use of pasture lands was allowed at certain rates for every head of cattle, sheep, and other animals. A maximum of land was fixed, as no person was allowed to possess more of the public lands, than a section of about 350 acres of arable or plantation land, or to feed more than 100 head of black cattle, or 500 of small cattle, on the public pastures; those parts of the public lands, at the time of the passing of the law, in possession of individuals, exceeding 350 acres each, were to be assigned to the poorer citizens, in property, in lots of about four acres and a half each; it contained an important clause, binding the assignees of the public lands to employ freemen as labourers, in proportion to the extent of their possessions. This salutary regulation was, however, evaded by the patricians, and to such an extent did they introduce slaves, to the exclusion of the free population, that at a

future period the very existence of the nation was threatened by a general insurrection of the slaves, under the energetic command of Spartacus. The third question settled by the Licinian Rogations was, the adjustment of private debts, and the regulation of the rate of the interest of money.—Without an intimate acquaintance with the domestic state of the ancient Romans, it is impossible to form correct ideas of the nature of this section of the celebrated laws of Licinius: the object of the usury law was, to protect the debtor against the rapacity of the money-lender; and the portion of the law, which decided the time and mode of settling private debts, appeared to have been analogous with insolvent debtors' and bankrupt laws of modern commercial nations.

In order to form a correct estimate of the importance of the Licinian laws, and of the talent, courage, and perseverance, displayed by the authors of them, it is necessary to recapitulate the circumstances which conduced to the enormous power possessed at this time by the aristocratic party.

The political power of the patrician order was based and maintained on the subsistence of the great body of citizens: in this case, the control of subsistence constituted political and military power. The public domains, which consisted of lands, the property of the state, had been, ever since the expulsion of Tarquin, illegally seized by the aristocracy, and divided among themselves, to the exclusion of the bulk of the people. From that event to the Agrarian law of Licinius, a space of about 140 years, a continued struggle had been carried on by the people to recover their rights. The patricians not only usurped the possession of the public lands, but they very soon even evaded the payment of the land-tax, or rent, for the use of the lands so

occupied. But, while they threw the burden off themselves, they succeeded in imposing it, with all its weight, on the shoulders of the people, who were forced to pay the full extent of the tax on such lands as still belonged to them, and at the same time bear the other burdens of the state. There is a wonderful similarity in the nature and operations of the Roman patricians, to those of aristocracies of modern times. Pride and meanness, cruelty and rapacity, are the characteristics of both.

The unjust and unequal pressure on the citizens had reached its greatest height, after the invasion by the Gauls. The property-tax was continued to be exacted from them, even after the property which stood registered in the censor's books had ceased to exist. An attempt was made to force a new valuation, but this very reasonable proceeding was opposed by the dominant aristocratic order, whose cruelty and sordid disposition were displayed to infatuation towards their distressed countrymen, even when the public lands were in illegal possession of the order, without being subject to any taxes. The Roman laws affecting debtors were of the most severe character :—the debtor, who failed in his engagements, was handed over without mercy to the creditor, who might keep him in chains, or immure him in prison, or put him to death, or sell him as a slave beyond the boundary of the republic. Thousands of citizens thus fell into the hands of the aristocratic body, who seemed to derive delight in having bands of them kept in dungeons; and at this time, the cruelties exercised on the people called loudly for vengeance.

As the citizens of the different tribes were embodied and trained in arms, it would excite surprise that they did not redress their grievances at the sword's point, and crush at one blow their domestic enemies. But it must be borne

in mind, that the Roman people, as exhibited in the respective tribes, were lovers of order, and had great respect for the laws and institutions of their country; and as they reserved their arms for the enemies with whom they were almost always at war, they rather endured the rapacious proceedings of the aristocracy, than, by entering into civil broils, give an advantage to their foreign foes. They fought the constitutional battle with their domestic oppressors, by means of their tribunes, who acted as their attorneys in defending and prosecuting their interests.

But another motive checked them from proceeding to extremities with the patricians. These usurpers of the public lands cemented their political power by dispensing the food, which they tore from their fellow-citizens, to a class of men whom they maintained, as dependents, on the soil which in right belonged to every Roman. This class of the population was called the *clientela* of the patricians. The clients of the patrician families consisted, either of men excluded from the tribes, or of emancipated slaves; or they were citizens of some foreign state, who put themselves under the protection of a powerful family; or, in fine, they were composed of men whose debts placed them at the mercy of the patricians whom they chose for their patrons. They were allotted small tracts of lands, held at the will of patricians, and were entirely devoted to the interests of their respective patrons.

But, as they were bound as vassals to the lords, the latter on the other hand were obliged to protect their clients. In the early age of the Roman republic, the relation of the patricians to their clients, was analogous to the state of the Highland chieftains and the individuals of the clan. As the people, properly so called, increased in numbers and political influence, the clientry was augmented with a view to

overawe the citizens in the exercise of their privileges. The clients were employed at elections as mere tools of their aristocratic patrons. In this respect they acted a part very similar to the serf-like tenants, employed in the present day to vote at elections in England, in favour of the nominees of the men who control the subsistence of the unfortunate dependants without a will of their own.

One of the tritest observations that can be made, is, the sameness of human nature in all ages and countries; but it strikes one with astonishment, to find a practice prevailing in Rome, subsequent to the Licinian law, which appears so truly like an English custom in similar cases, in the middle of the nineteenth century: "It was usual for the citizens, in going up to give their votes, to pass between railings which fenced them off from the multitude without. The aristocrats had made use of this circumstance, by causing the space between the rails to be made sufficiently wide for their partisans and dependants to stand ranged in the inside, in order to ply the voters with solicitations or menaces. The Marian law of suffrages limited this space, so that only the voters should have room to pass."* The clients or partisans of the patricians could be mustered in very formidable bodies. Some of the most powerful families could bring to Rome four to five thousand men entirely devoted to their interests.

These particulars will serve to convey an idea of the power of the Roman tribes of citizens under the active and courageous conduct of C. Licinius Stolo and L. Sextius, the authors of the regeneration of Rome, against an influence so strong as that of the aristocracy; but the people rallied round their leaders, and were resolved to brave a civil war, if provoked by the patricians.

* Lardner's History of Rome.

The Licinian laws were passed in the year of Rome 387, or in the 366th year before the Christian era. In their effect on the character and condition of the Roman people, and in their general results, there are few events in the whole history of mankind so important as these laws.

The treaty of Magna Charta was of vast importance to the English people, as it not only ameliorated the condition of the generation existing at the passing of that law, but it has served as the basis of the liberty of the nation, during a period of upwards of six centuries of years: but to the Romans, the Licinian laws were not only the guarantee for their civil and political freedom, but they actually restored to the citizens the usufruct of the soil, of which they had been deprived by the dominant faction in the country. In the case of the Romans, it was the people pulling out of the grasp of the aristocracy, property of which they had been plundered; and compelling the same aristocracy to divide with the people the possession of the national power. In the case of the English, it was merely the aristocracy forcing a stupid, unprincipled, and cowardly monarch to yield to conditions which were so framed, as to secure the suffrages of the bulk of the citizens, whose condition would be improved by the measure. The unfortunate Saxon race were too much abased, and the means of their subsistence too strongly in the clutches of their oppressors, even to remonstrate against the Norman possessors of their lands. From the time of the seizure of the lands by William the Conqueror, by his introduction of the feudal law, to the date of the signature of the great charter, a period of 145 years had elapsed; and from the expulsion of the Roman king, when the patricians seized the public lands, to the passing of the Agrarian laws of Licinius, the time was 143 years.

But, in their consequences, there was an overwhelming importance in these Roman laws of the division of property, which scarcely belongs to any other laws,—for they really decided the fate of the world. The Roman people started at once into vigour, and took the first step in the march which led them to the conquest of the then known globe. The citizens, being secured in the possession of the means of subsistence for themselves and families from the lands assigned to them, and after settling arrangements for cultivation, dedicated themselves to the defence, and to the aggrandizement of their country.

They were first called to repel the Gauls, those fierce barbarians who were now making vigorous exertions to locate themselves in the fertile districts of Italy. The Romans either destroyed them, or drove them to find refuge in other regions. They afterwards entered with energy into the wars with the nations that surrounded their territories ; and, subduing one after another, found, at the end of about seventy years from the passing of the Agrarian law, the whole of Italy under their rule. Military ardour and emulation in battle animated the citizens, from the moment that “every one could aspire to attain his fitting place and recompense.” All ranks and military honours were open, and attainable by the meritorious: the common soldier might rise to be a general before the conclusion of a campaign, and ambition thus led to noble actions and patriotic sacrifices. For the space of two hundred years after the Agrarian laws were enacted, most of the great exploits which have immortalized the Roman name were performed by men sprung from the body of the people.

By valour and superior discipline, the Romans subdued the various nations around them, and they retained their dominion by a policy, which marked their wisdom as mili-

tary colonizers of the countries thus brought under their rule: a third of the lands was reserved for assignment to Roman settlers on the conquered territories; and by a plan of citizenship, the old inhabitants were brought to identify themselves with their new masters. One state which had for several centuries been a peaceable neighbour, at length incurred the resentment, and brought down the vengeance, of Rome, by its requiring the surrender of one-half of the lands of the conquered people.

Although this system of aggrandisement of a people, by foreign conquest, is condemned by public opinion in modern times, and in fact would not be permitted among civilized nations, still we cannot but admire, and may even applaud, the course pursued by the ancient Romans. In those early ages, wars were the business and almost the recreation of men; and as communities or nations consisted of tribes living without much of the artificial refinements of society, military operations of an offensive or defensive nature could be carried on, without great derangement to the social system; in fine, war might almost be termed the natural state of such communities. The calm of peace, in ancient times, was oftener the slumbering torpor of a people under the pressure of despotism, than the quiet enjoyment of the blessings arising from freedom from violent disturbance. The Romans only followed the course which the circumstances of the times forced upon them; and the valour, discipline, and wisdom displayed by them in extending and sustaining the power which victory afforded them, have been, and will be, the subjects of admiration in all ages. Indeed the very existence of the present great European nations, may be said to be derived from the Roman stock of empire; but wars, which indirectly led to this state of matters, are not now necessary for its perma-

nency. The affairs of society have become complicated, and are of a too artificial nature to bear, without great detriment, the violent operations of war. Considering ancient wars as the means of having spread indirectly civilization over the nations of the world, commerce, in modern times, accomplishes, or ought to accomplish, in human affairs, all that wars formerly achieved.

But the Romans, as they extended their conquests and cemented their power, became intoxicated with victory, and corrupted by the spoils of war. A sudden influx of wealth was accompanied with its usual effects on the habits and manners of the people; but one of the most demoralizing circumstances of this system of warfare, was to be found in the extraordinary increase of captives, who, by the laws of war in those ages, became slaves for life to the conquerors. In the latter age of the republic, about 150,000 slaves were made in one war, and distributed through Italy. The liberties of the Roman citizens were gradually giving way under such a system, and the power and corruption of the aristocratic order, increased by the extension of territory, and by the plunder of the conquered people. A strife commenced between the old patricians and the burghers, on account of the former becoming richer and richer by war, and the administration of public offices, while the people became poorer and poorer by military service. The Agrarian laws of Licinius had become a dead letter, and, at the end of the second century from their enactment, the immense tracts of land acquired by the military services of the people, were a prey to the rapacity of the patricians.

The usurped possession of the public lands, at a time when the population had so greatly increased, enabled the aristocratic order effectually to command the food of the

citizens; and exorbitant wealth, in the shape of gold and silver, afforded the means of bribery and corruption.

The people were rapidly sinking under this tyrannical power, when two extraordinary men, brothers, appeared, and made noble efforts to save their unhappy countrymen from ruin. The state of the country at this period was really dreadful,—for the people were not only deprived of their share of the public domains, but the aristocratic usurpers of the lands actually employed slaves for their cultivation, and turned off the free population. To increase the miseries of the people, oppressive war-taxes weighed down the middle and poorer classes, who were obliged to sell their little patrimonial farms, to raise funds to satisfy the rapacious demands of the dominant faction, whose wealth enabled them to buy up the property thus offered for sale. The object of the Gracchi, was to restore the public lands to the people, and to renew the Agrarian laws of Licinius, but, as was to be expected, they met with the most vehement opposition from the senate, who were the possessors, or rather plunderers, of the public property.

But, even in this time of patrician power and corruption, the constitutional forms were observed by the Gracchi, in their efforts to obtain justice for the people; but these legal forms were set at nought by the insolence of the aristocratic faction, for “even when Tiberius Gracchus had at length carried his point of getting his rogation read to the people, and had proceeded to erect booths for the voters, and caused the balloting boxes to be placed in readiness, these boxes or urns, in which the votes were deposited, were removed by force by the partisans of the senatorial faction.” *

At length this brave and patriotic man fell a victim to senatorial vengeance, which was also wreaked on the

* Lairdner's History.

defenceless multitude, waiting to learn the issue of the business. Many thousand citizens were on this occasion massacred by a numerous band of slaves and clients, led on by the consul himself.

The cruelty of the conquering party bred the bitterest enmity between the aristocracy and the people, and from this time political struggles of parties sank into the unnatural contest between the rich and the poor. This was shown in the most terrible civil wars that ever convulsed a country. The people throughout the Italian states, almost rose in mass to demand a redress of grievances, and, in twenty years afterwards, the slave population, under the command of the celebrated Spartacus, flew to arms, and carried consternation even to Rome itself. The first was called the Social war, and the second the Servile war. On the breaking out of the Social war, it was proposed to "win the poorer class of citizens, by allotments of land, and the wholly indigent by distribution of corn."

The aristocracy, who pushed aside the free population to supply their place with slaves, and who ruled both with a rod of iron, were properly considered the authors of the Servile war. Sylla the dictator declared to his army, "*that might prevailed over right at Rome*, and that he contemplated the bestowing, through the extirpation of one generation, a wholly new constitution on another." However, death prevented this monster from effecting his fell design; but previous to his death he had become satiated with blood; and, disgusted with his own cruelty, he abdicated the seat of power, at a time when all men thought him fixed in it beyond the chance of removal. From this event, the affairs of the Roman people rushed to a crisis, and from it commenced that terrible struggle among a few of the most powerful men, for the empire of Rome, and, through it,

of the world, and at the end of about seven hundred years from the foundation of the city, a corrupt aristocracy and an impoverished and dispirited people were crushed under the pure military despotism of the Emperors. Their history will not be farther pursued, as it only presents the harsh features of unrelenting tyranny, and the abasement and consequent corruption of the people, whose voice was at length heard only in the cry for bread, and the gladiator.

PART II.

ANALYSIS OF THE ROMAN HISTORY.

THE ECONOMICS OF THE ROMAN ARISTOCRATIC SYSTEM APPLIED TO THE CONDITION OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE.—THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE ROMAN AND BRITISH CORN-LAWS.—THE ROMAN CITIZENS WERE FED FOR THEIR POLITICAL VOTES, BUT BECAME SLAVES FOR WANT OF A PURE REPRESENTATIVE LEGISLATIVE SYSTEM

BUT there are some circumstances in the Roman history, down to the establishment of the empire under Augustus Cæsar, which will be referred to in support of the definition that Food is Power.

Rome had its system of corn-laws; but the object of them was not to prohibit or restrict the importation of corn into Italy, and thereby give a monopoly of the home-market to the aristocracy in possession of the public lands; it was rather to encourage the introduction of grain, and to reduce its price.

In a country so circumstanced as Italy, with the most fertile lands completely in the hands of the aristocracy, this care on the part of the government to provide an abundant supply of cheap bread, is rather remarkable. A free trade

in corn was allowed and encouraged, and the number of small vessels employed in it was very great. Corn was imported from Sicily, Africa, and from the shores of the Black Sea, and the tonnage annually entered at the port of Rome was about 700,000; the value of the grain for a year's consumption of the capital was about two millions and a half sterling money. This was at a late period of the republic, and at the beginning of the empire. A great part of the lands were thrown out of cultivation for corn, and hence the necessity of supplies from other countries. The aristocrats cleared the lands that they seized of the free labourers, and employed in their stead, the captives taken in war; as it was found more profitable to retain or convert the lands into pasture, to plant vines and other fruit-trees, or to grow timber, than to raise grain. The clearing of the country of the old settled inhabitants, was in its ends similar to those unnatural proceedings which have been witnessed in our own day, of turning off from Scotland and Ireland the small tenantry, the ancestry of whom perhaps had been located on the soil for centuries.

The Roman aristocracy employed the slaves taken in battle, as their labour was less expensive than that of free-men, and hence the rapid decline of the state. In modern times, a system of slavery has been found to be demoralizing to the employers of the slaves; but from an idea of its economy it was continued as long as a superior authority allowed it. The early settlers in the colony of New South Wales would not employ free labourers, while convict slaves could be procured at the cost of maintenance. Among the Romans, the atrocities committed on the unfortunate slaves will appear almost incredible. The emperors were milder than the aristocracy. When the slaves became old and unfit for work, they were "got rid

of" to save their keeping, but the emperor Claudius issued an order to prohibit the masters from killing their slaves.

The turning of the free population off the public lands, caused great numbers of citizens to resort to Rome, where they had to find employment in the best way they could; and as the slaves and clients of the patricians were brought up to various mechanical trades, the free people found many competitors in the enslaved or dependent classes.

But the inhabitants both free and bond had to be fed. So early as the fourth century of the existence of Rome, the supply of provisions was a matter of great difficulty on account of the low state of trade, and the sale of grain was intrusted to commissioners appointed by the State. The population of the capital continued to increase, by the influx of citizens attracted to it, to exercise the right of suffrage. The supply of corn to the citizens, became an established part of the system of government; this was effected at an enormous expense to the governing order; and will show to all governments to the end of time, the retributive consequences of a too grasping disposition in the dominant faction, over the means of subsistence of the great mass of the population. Large numbers were fed to be kept quiet, and other classes were maintained in order to secure their votes at public assemblies.

At first the people were supplied with corn-tickets, to enable them to get so much grain at a price considerably less than the cost or market price *. The grain was delivered from the public granaries on the presentation of the ticket. As the distresses of the people increased, or as the

* Persons with a corn-ticket got 35 pounds of coarse, or 25 lbs of fine bread, at a rate of 2½d. and 3d per lb. The cost of this bread was about 8½d. a pound, so that the government lost from 6d. to 5½d. a pound, *to feed the people for their votes.*

competition between political leaders became stronger, the terms of quantity and price, offered to the citizens, were more advantageous, and at length gratuitous distributions of corn were issued to a stated number of burghers. In the reign of Augustus, it is said that 200,000 persons received food on free corn-tickets. Tickets were given for a month, a quarter, and afterwards for life, and even became hereditary, and could be bequeathed by will.

All Rome enjoyed corn at reduced rates. This system of a public supply of corn for the population, gave rise to, and encouraged corruption and speculation to an enormous extent, among the governors of provinces, and other officers concerned in the contracts for the corn. Immense fortunes were made in speculation. A gigantic monied interest arose, not to be grappled with.

Joint Stock-Jobbing Companies were formed, to support with their capital great undertakings. The revenues of the state were farmed by the Equestrian order. Advances of money were made on all sorts of property, and from the failure of the payment of the interest, lands, houses, public buildings, and even temples, became ultimately the property of companies or of individual capitalists.

The lower that the Roman people descended towards the abyss of ruin, brought on them by a long continuance of aristocratic oppression, the more striking became the apparent magnificence of hospitality on the one part, and the necessity of receiving that hospitality by the people on the other. At the time of Cataline's conspiracy, the senate caused a distribution of corn to be made to the people, in order to prevent disturbance at the crisis. After the death of Sylla, Crassus, the wealthiest man in Italy, in order to gain the favour of the people, entertained them at a thousand tables, distributed corn to the poor, and fed the

greatest part of the citizens for about three months. Julius Cæsar in his triumphant entrance into Rome, on his return from the African war, distributed to each citizen, ten bushels of corn, ten pounds of oil, and a present of money equal to about forty shillings sterling.

When the struggle for empire between Augustus, Antony, and Pompey was drawing to a close, Augustus promised his troops, lands in Italy, as a recompense for their services; and as Antony claimed for his followers a share in the distribution, a greater degree of bitterness was infused into the combatants. But between them both, the miserable inhabitants were sacrificed, and husbandmen and shepherds, with their wives and children, with piteous cries, in vain implored the mercy of the insolent soldiers who took possession of their farms. Pompey, having command of the sea, cut off all supplies of corn and provisions destined for Italy, which with the capital felt the extremity of distress. The subsistence of the people being thus effectually at the command of a few competitors for power, the citizens had no alternative but to yield to the iron despotism of the conqueror.

Many valuable lessons are to be learned by modern nations, from the history of the Roman people. With a strong passion for liberty, and with a capacity for its enjoyment, the Romans, after a long and severe struggle, sunk down, and politically perished, for the want of the knowledge and practice of the representative system of legislation. The Romans were designed for certain objects, in the extension of their dominion over the nations and tribes of the world; but had God willed that their power should be permanent, it is not irreverent, it is to be hoped, to say, that he would have imparted to them a knowledge of the elective representative principle of government. The Roman government, down to the first emperor, may be designated an aristo-

cracy, checked by a popular veto on its proceedings, but there was no principle of representation and responsibility, as found in the British and North American systems.

The tribunes were more properly attorneys, or protectors, of the people, than their representatives, and there are several cases in which they abused the trust confided to them. They were frequently tempted to join the aristocratic party, against the very citizens who had done them the honour to appoint them to their high office.

Climate has a powerful influence over the customs, manners, and laws of a people. All primitive people congregate in their public assemblies in the open air. Between the parallels of 30° to 40° north or south latitude, the regularity of the weather can be calculated upon, for meetings either religious, political, or social; the inhabitants in those regions know with certainty what will be the state of the sky almost on any given day in the year; they enjoy at fixed seasons balmy airs and cloudless heavens, and regulate public business and social amusements accordingly. From the earliest ages, the Diets, or assemblies of the Latin towns, were held at the fountain in the grove of Ferentina; and the Roman citizens, in voting by their tribes, assembled in the forum, under the canopy of heaven. The circumstances were different with the ancient Germans, and the ancestors of the British people; unexpected changes of weather, rain and storms, must have often dispersed the public meetings of the people; but as the love of liberty in the ancient Britons and Anglo-Saxons was as ardent as in the Roman breast, it was not to be subdued by the war of the elements. No buildings were capacious enough to contain the citizens who might assemble to discuss public matters, and from these circumstances of irregularity of climate and deficiency of house-room, the

practice of electing deputies, to meet as representatives of the whole body of citizens, and from that the modern system, no doubt originated. The principle is as ingenious as it is wise, and the British people never can be at the summit of their power, until it be restored to its original purity, and extended through the length and breadth of the land.

When we consider over what a vast portion of the globe the Roman power was established, and how many ages it endured, it strikes one with astonishment to find scarcely any trace of that gigantic power remaining in the institutions or laws of the many nations that were formerly subjected to it. It is true, that the Roman code of laws forms the basis of the civil law of most of the nations of Europe; but this circumstance is of modern date, and has no connection whatever with the original dominion of the Romans over the nations that adopted the Justinian laws.

In the institutions, or even traditions, of nations, we find few relics of Roman government or polity. The Roman system was a pure military one, and it seemed formed for the speedy and effectual amalgamation of the Italian settlers with the mass of the conquered population. But, in the absence of any moral or political remains, we find the stupendous physical works of that extraordinary people standing at this day in every country—the proud monuments of their science, as civil and military engineers.

Throughout Europe, Asia, and Africa, wherever they established their power, we see the ground covered with the ruins of their empire. From *Petræa* in Arabia to the Grampian Mountains in Scotland, we find the surface marked with military lines, sites of encampments, and remains of roads and bridges; and with so much judgment were the military positions chosen, that in modern warfare, with science unknown to the ancients, the positions would

serve for armies in possession of artillery and the musket, instead of the catapult and the javelin.* The Romans thus rested their dominion on military force, with its accompaniment of forts, walls, and mounds. Their descendants are seen in the present day, but without military power, and without nationality; the petty political States of modern Italy represent the ancient tribes whence the conquering Romans proceeded. The grand cycle is about to come round in Roman history, but what will result from the next turn of it, it is impossible for any human being to predict.

In contrast with the issue of the Roman power, mark the origin and progress of the Anglo race. From the date of the foundation of Rome, to the transfer of the empire to Constantinople, a period elapsed of a thousand and eighty years; that event split the Roman empire, and led to its destruction. Eighteen hundred and ninety-seven years have passed since Julius Cæsar invaded the coasts of England, and what is the state of the island at the present time?

The people have gradually advanced under the representative system of government, *in spite* of a retarding drag-weight which would have ruined any other people. The representative system is the palladium of the British nation.

* In proof of this, two instances in the military annals of Great Britain may be adduced; first, the impregnable position occupied by the Presbyterian army, under Leslie, previous to its coming down to the plain to offer battle to Cromwell at Dunbar, was the site of an ancient Roman camp. Second, The entrenched Roman camp on the Downs, above the village of Woodbury, between Exmouth and Exeter, was chosen for the concentration of a considerable force, of all arms, at the time of the expected invasion by Napoleon, in the beginning of the present century.

The author, in his rambles, has visited both these spots, which command extensive and interesting views of fine countries.

There must be *no* niggard disposition displayed in dispensing the blessings of it. One mighty nation has already started into existence, derived from such a vigorous root. Other nations are springing up under the representative power.

In the parent country, every thing for its safety and happiness depends upon an expansion of the suffrage, and the uncorrupted nature of the election. The Roman people lost their liberties along with their subsistence; they were made poor and thus corrupted, and were at length actually fed for their votes, to enable their political oppressors to mock the citizens in their miserable condition.*

Let the British citizens open their eyes to the peril to which they are now exposed. Corruption may so far undermine the foundations of the representative system, as to lead to a ruin as terrible as that which overwhelmed the Roman people.†

ROME AND CARTHAGE.

The transactions of the Roman people have been considered as illustrative of the domestic struggles between the

* "A nation of legislators and conquerors might assert their claim to the harvests of Africa, which had been purchased with their blood; and it was artfully contrived by Augustus, that in the enjoyment of plenty, the Romans should lose the memory of freedom. But the prodigality of Constantine could not be excused by any consideration, either of public or private interest, and the annual tribute of corn imposed upon Egypt for the benefit of his new capital, was applied to feed a lazy and indolent populace, at the expense of the husbandmen of an industrious province.—*Gibbon's Roman Empire*, chap. xvii.

† The foregoing sketch of the Roman History, applied to the circumstances of Great Britain, is drawn from the cabinet edition of Laidner's *History of Rome*—from the *Roman History*, by Niebuhr—and from an abridged history of that extraordinary people.

citizens and the patrician order, and on closing these sketches of the exciting and instructive passages from the history of that remarkable people, it will not be without use to allude cursorily to the fierce commercial and maritime wars, which, with some intervals of peace, were carried on for upwards of a hundred years, between the Romans and Carthaginians, ending in the total destruction of the latter.

There is only the Roman account extant of those wars, and of the condition of the Carthaginian nation. We have therefore in the present day a partial history only.

The resources and power of Carthage were very great, and enabled her to retain the command of the navigation of the Mediterranean for about six hundred years, and to plant colonies along the shores of that sea. The resources appeared to have been entirely derived from manufactures and commerce, for the territory occupied by the Carthaginian republic, was only about forty miles round, and at first a ground-rent was paid for it to the native inhabitants of the country. The possession of the gold and silver mines of Spain, must have put into the power of the Carthaginians immense sums of the precious metals; and the manufacturing ingenuity and enterprise of that people enabled them to acquire the productions of every tribe and nation at that period, within reach of their maritime and terrestrial traffic.

To give an idea of the naval and military strength of Carthage at the height of her power, it will be sufficient to mention the fact, that one of her foreign expeditions consisted of 300,000 men, conveyed in 2,000 ships of war, and 3,000 transports, and taking the vessels at 100 tons each, there would be about half a million of tonnage employed. Neither England nor France, in the present day, could send out to sea such an immense armament.

Whatever were the nature and component parts of the government of Carthage, the system established appeared to have suited the genius of the people, and allowed full development to their physical and mental powers. The extraordinary talents displayed by all the generals and commanders of their foreign enterprises, proved that men were chosen for their abilities and fitness for their respective offices, and not appointed to gratify the ambition or caprice of influential individuals.

As enemies, the Carthaginians and Romans were worthy of each other, and the struggle for the empire of the Mediterranean, and through it, of the world, could terminate only in the destruction of one of the parties. Carthage was finally subjugated, and razed to the ground by the Roman power, in the 147th year before the Christian era, after having stood for more than seven hundred years.

In modern times nothing similar to the issue of the struggle between Rome and Carthage has taken place, but some of the fiercest wars, within the last two hundred years, between European nations, have been commercial wars. The sanguinary battles between the English and the Dutch, towards the end of the seventeenth century, were for the mastery of the narrow seas, and after many vicissitudes the English triumphed. The wars between Great Britain and Spain, in the eighteenth century, were for commercial and colonial objects.

At the present moment, events have occurred in the East, and in the West, which are concentrating the attention and exciting the rivalry of the three great maritime nations of the globe. The great commercial routes, which were opened and frequented by the Tyrians, the Carthaginians, and the Romans, are again becoming the highways to eastern and southern Asia; and European nations are now frequenting

roads to those regions, which have been closed ever since the discovery of the passage by the Cape of Good Hope. The cycle of two thousand years is coming round to the middle of the nineteenth century!

Let Great Britain, France, and America, and every nation, impress these facts on their minds,—that the globe is wide enough for them all, and affords full scope for every useful enterprise, and that it would be folly to waste their energies on mutual destruction.

CHAP. IV.

PASSAGES FROM THE GREAT FRENCH REVOLUTION.

ARISTOCRATIC POWER CRUSHED THE PEOPLE—CURTAILED THEIR SUBSISTENCE AND DROVE THEM INTO FURY—INFATUATION IS APT TO SEIZE UPON ARISTOCRATIC BODIES—ANALOGIES BETWEEN THE OLD FRENCH AND THE PRESENT BRITISH ARISTOCRACIES

It is affirmed that the control of the subsistence of a people, constitutes power, in the hands of a governing party, whether a monarch or an aristocracy. As there is an analogy between the ancient Roman character and history, and the British of modern ages, a good deal of detail has been given, in illustration of the circumstances of the two nations. Coming down within the memory of the present generation, we have the example of the French nation for the use and instruction of the British people. But from the freshness of the dates and the evidence of the incidents, it will not be necessary to do more than allude to a few striking parallels.

It is a matter of historical notoriety, that excessive taxation, the unequal pressure of the load, the insolence of the privileged classes of society, the consequent derangement of the finances, and the vacillation and irresolution of the government, led to those excesses and outbreaks of the French population, that ended in one of the most terrible revolutions, involving every nation of Europe in its vortex,

which ever convulsed the world. In tracing the origin of that great convulsion, much has been attributed to the writings and intrigues of Voltaire, D'Alembert, Diderot, and the other authors of the *Encyclopedie*. But it is impossible to conceive that any men, however able, and however persevering in the exercise of the most powerful talents over the minds of other men, could have produced such results as those witnessed in France at the end of the 18th century, unless there had been existent in society, cruelty and injustice in the governing power, distress and discontentment among the masses of the people, and, above all, worldly pride, immorality, and hypocrisy in the ministers of the public religion. A venal church with its host of monks, friars, and debauched priests, was held up to the ridicule and contempt of mankind; and Christianity itself was assailed, and for a time publicly abolished, in consequence of the abuse of it by a proud and corrupt hierarchy.

As long as the people of a country have the Bible in their own hands, there need be no apprehension of the fall of this church, or the rise of that one, because every man is supposed to be able to exercise his own judgment, under God, on the course to be followed in the establishment of a public form of religion. In this respect there is no similarity in the present case of Great Britain and of France, previous to the revolution of 1789. But, in the state of the fiscal affairs of the two countries at that period and at present, there is enough to excite an anxious interest in the government and people of Great Britain.

Necker, in his celebrated exposé on the administration of the finances of France, published several years before the Revolution, had, for his great object, the lightening of the burdens of taxation on the lower classes of the people,

by a more equal assessment of the taxes, and by a system of economy both in the collection and in the expenditure of the public money.

Had he accomplished his object of establishing the principles of fair play and justice in the distribution of the public burdens, had he lightened the load of the labouring classes, and transferred to the rich their proper share of the load, all the sophistries of Voltaire, and the intrigues of his associates, would have passed in empty air; and Europe, in all probability, would have been spared the disgrace of being conquered by Napoleon, and saved the trouble afterwards of chaining that extraordinary man to the rock of St. Helena.

Necker wrote like a wise statesman, when he said, "The alterations that may happen in the circumstances of the rich are indifferent to the state, and it is sufficient to subject these variations to the rules of justice and to the empire of the laws; but the diminutions that the moderate incomes of the poor may experience, are so nearly allied to the very sources of their existence, that they interest every one, and demand more especially the attention of the sovereign. . . . The man who by his labour gets no more than what is necessary for the subsistence of himself and his family, is continually exposed to troubles and anxieties; the least diminution of his earnings, or the smallest augmentation of his expenses, affects him in a very sensible manner, and every unfortunate incident that he cannot foresee must lessen those scanty savings that proceed from his labours, and which were intended to supply his wants in the hours of sickness or repose. A minister cannot impress these truths too deeply on his mind."*

* Necker's Administration of the Finances of France, vol. i. Introduction. p. lxxiv. English Translation, by Thos. Mortimer, 1784.

Those remarks were written at a time, when the relative circumstances of taxation in Great Britain and France were very different. It is absolutely necessary for the inhabitants of this country to look matters sternly in the face, when they are informed, that our system of taxation is now the same in principle, and as intolerable to the bulk of the people, as that which existed in France previous to the great Revolution. Necker says: "The burden of the taxes is more especially aggravating, when too great a share of them falls on the poorest classes of the subjects; for a proper direction in the assignment of the taxes, modifies their essence; and we see that, in Great Britain, that part of the taxes to which the poorer sort is liable, is infinitely less considerable than in France."* How altered is the state of the case in the present year, 1842, from what it was in 1782! but there is an addition of £600,000,000 to the national debt since that period, the interest of which is paid from taxes on Food; by which means the veriest beggar is made to contribute his share. It must be impressed on the minds of the individuals in this country, born since 1815, that the war entered into with the French nation, at the beginning of its Revolution, was one of dynasty,—that is to say, the British government fought to replace the Bourbon family on the throne, and to uphold the French aristocracy.

It must however be stated, that the war, after the truce of Amiens in the year 1802, became, on the part of Great Britain, a defensive one, as the Emperor Napoleon avowed his object to be to reduce or ruin the power and influence of this country. But, taking the grand result of the war, we find the original object carried into full effect, by the restoration of the Bourbon heir to the throne of France in

1814; and by the forcible replacement of him by the armies of Great Britain and her allies, after the decisive victory of Waterloo in the following year. The French people, however, recovered their liberty, and, in one week, neutralized all our efforts during a war of a quarter of a century, by dethroning in 1830, the family that has cost the labouring classes of this country so much misery.

The total amount of taxes in France some years previous to the Revolution was in sterling money, £24,375,000.

The expense of collection between 10 and 11 per cent.

The number of persons of all kinds employed in the collection was about 250,000.

The total amount of taxes of England and Scotland in 1784, including the cost of collection, poor-rates, and turnpikes, was about £17,800,000.

The total amount of taxes, including the cost of collection, poor-rates, and turnpikes in 1842, was about £60,000,000.

So much for wars to force a royal family on a foreign nation!

In proportion to the population, the expenditure of France before the Revolution, was at the rate of about £1 sterling a head. In Great Britain, it is now at the rate of about £2 sterling a head. But in France, it was not so much the amount of the gross taxation, as the unequal pressure, and the injustice of the principle, that caused the evil. The fabric of British taxation is so constructed as to rest on the mass of the population, and press them down with a physical and moral weight:—the physical load, is the actual tax that curtails the subsistence of the labouring classes; and the moral weight, is the injustice of charging them with the expense of protecting the property of the

wealthy and powerful, in order to save the abstraction of a certain proportion of that property to secure itself. It is necessary to expose the evil principle of British taxation, by every mode of illustration; and, although it is perfectly true, that the wealthiest and most powerful man in the British dominions is as much under the law, and amenable for a breach of it, as the humblest peasant that digs the soil; still it must be impressed on the public mind, that laws taxing or restricting the food of the people, are not felt so as to inconvenience, to a perceptible degree, the wealthy and powerful individuals who make the laws; the labouring classes, and all who exercise industry, are grievously injured in their circumstances by such laws. It is the more necessary to place these truths in a clear light, as, during the agitation caused by the provision-laws, it was repeatedly demanded by the defenders of them, in what consisted the injustice and partiality of laws to which all classes from peers to labourers were alike subject? It was asked, does the poor man pay a *higher* duty on his sugar, coffee, or tea, than the richest individual in the land? Does the law-maker not pay a heavy duty on his high-flavoured wines and other foreign luxuries? and on the porter and ale used in his family, does he not pay the same duty as the labourer? In these cases, it is true that rich and poor are placed on apparently an equal footing, but there the equality ends; for can it be said, that in the object and ends of this enormous taxation, there is reciprocity between the great body of contributors, and the class of men who make and administer the laws, and, above all, who control the distribution of the amount collected?

In France, before the Revolution, the mass of the population was loaded with a heavy taxation, which galled by the

bad adjustment of its weight, and superincumbent was the pressure of privileged classes who preyed on the industry of the people.

Necker was beset by a crowd of begging aristocrats, who pressed on him their respective demands on the exchequer. To one, who asked for a thousand crowns, as being a sum that could not put the treasury to much difficulty, he answered "that a thousand crowns were the amount of the land-tax of two villages, and left the applicant to judge whether he had a right to such a tax."* Barruel, a contemporary historian, thus describes the aristocracy just previous to the Revolution: "Greedy courtiers disgust the monarch with their intrigues—alienate the people by their scandals—corrupt them by their impiety—and irritate them by their luxury"†

Thiers, in his History of the French Revolution, gives the following picture of the state of society before the great catastrophe: "Grandeers, who had abandoned their feudal dignity in favour of the monarch, and who disputed among themselves by intrigue, the property of the people, which was delivered into their hands; and besides an immense population, without any relation with this royal aristocracy, except that of an habitual submission, and the payment of taxes."‡ "The courtiers who enjoyed the fruits of their abuses, would have wished to see the embarrassments of the treasury terminate, provided it did not cost them a single sacrifice—they commiserated at the chase the vexations exercised against the labourers."§

* Vol. I. p. 47.

† Barruel's History of Jacobinism; English translation by Clifford, 1798. Vol. II. p. 444

‡ Thiers' History, Vol. I. p. 5.

§ *Ibid* Vol. I. p. 11.—One of the Ministers of the British Government remarked, in August, 1842, as a reason for the prorogation of Parliament, that *pheasant-shooting had commenced*.

What a striking likeness there is between the French aristocrats at the chase, pitying the vexations exercised against the labourers—and the English legislative sportsmen pursuing their game, while the manufacturing towns of England were in a state of convulsion, by the taxation that is ruining their resources !

The exactions of the aristocracy irritated the French people, and alienated their minds from the laws and monarchical institutions of their country. The monarch was patriotic, and of a disposition the farthest removed from acts of tyranny ; he and his family were humane and benevolent, but they fell victims to popular fury. Their execution was a great national crime ; and it was foolish, because it was useless. The aristocracy could not save them, but they fled from their country—left it to its fate—and threw themselves into the ranks of its enemies. The French nation, like noble steeds become wild—

“ Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race
Turned wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out—
Contending ’gainst obedience, as they would make
War with mankind ” *Macbeth*

Several circumstances concurred to precipitate France into the abyss of her Revolutions of 1789 and 1793. The intrigues of the secret societies instituted by Voltaire, and conducted by his successors—the discovery of the conspiracy against society by Weishaupt, and the German Illuminati—and the ripening of the plans of the great leaders of the revolutionary party—all came to a head and burst forth into action, within that interval of five years.

The secret association, which comprised all the most violent revolutionists, disguised the real designs of the conspirators, and secured the benevolent sympathies of the public, by assuming the philanthropic name, or designation,

of "*Friends of the Blacks*" of the West Indies and the Americas. This, and the other secret societies, at length merged into the famous club of the Jacobins.

Among the immediate causes of the excitement of the public mind about this time, the return of the troops that had aided the Americans in the achievement of their national independence, must not be omitted, as stimulating the people, by the speeches of the soldiers in favour of liberty.

The French people, being thus predisposed for great changes, were impelled to action by the secret movers; and the movement was accomplished on the principle laid down by the secret club of the Propagandists. The whole doctrine of this sect rested on the following basis: "*Want and opinion are the two agents which make all men act; cause the want—govern opinions—and you will overturn all the existing systems, however well consolidated they may appear.*"* The funds of this club, or order, were in the year 1790, about one million sterling in specie.

The scarcity of bread, amounting to famine, was one of the most distressing circumstances in the outbreak of the Revolution. The outbreak was the actual effect of hunger, and was caused by the acts of the revolutionary leaders. The finances of the government were in a state of derangement, which prevented measures for the supply of food. But all the corn that could be procured was bought by the conspirators, and stowed in warehouses, or deposited in barges, and sent from place to place, out of reach of the inhabitants of Paris, who clamorously called for bread. Barruel accuses Necker and Philip d'Orleans as the authors of this attempt to starve the people. It appeared that a great quantity of corn was deposited in Normandy, which the Parliament

* Barruel's History of Jacobinism, vol ii p 437

of Rouen wished to be distributed, but the answer of Neker to the application was evasive, and one of delay. On his dismissal from the ministry the second time, Barruel states that "the Parliament of Rouen had then obtained proof, that the same boats, laden with the same corn, had been sent from Paris—back again—then embarked at Rouen for Havre—and thence returned again, half rotten." *

Of the fearful fact of the famine and of its terrible consequences, there is evidence in the history of the time. In the attack on the bastille—"the courage of the besiegers was inflamed by the horrors of famine, there being at that time only twenty-four hours' provision of bread in Paris. For some days the people had assembled in crowds round the shops of the bakers, who were obliged to have a guard of soldiers to protect them from the famished multitude; while the women, rendered furious by want, cried in the resolute tone of despair—*We must have bread for our children.*"†

And in the march to Versailles we have another frightful picture: "All the bread which could be procured in the town of Versailles was distributed among the 'Poissards,' who, with savage ferocity, held up their morsels of bread on their bloody pikes towards the balcony, where the queen stood, crying in a tone of defiance, '*We have bread.*'‡ Such are the vivid pictures of the scene, drawn by an eye-witness.

The miseries of the French people drew forth the sympathy of the people of Great Britain. But the trial and execution of a king, innocent of the calamities that befell his country, checked the current of feeling; and war

* Barruel, vol. i. p. 264.

† Letters of Helen Maria Williams, written in France, 1790

‡ *Ibid.*

followed, to carry into another channel the passions of the British nation. At length terror reigned in France, and chilled to the core all sympathy for her Revolution. What a dreadful blow was struck on the cause of rational liberty by the Revolution in France! The spirit of demons took possession of her public men, and the following answer of the Committee of Public Safety to the inhabitants of Montauban, who were alarmed by the want of provisions, is truly diabolical. "Fear not, France has a sufficiency for twelve millions of inhabitants, all the rest (about 12,300,000) must be put to death, and then there will be no scarcity of bread."*

But after such terrible domestic convulsions, and fierce foreign wars that desolated Europe, has France gained nothing at the end of fifty years? Perhaps the half of her inhabitants who lived at the beginning of the Revolution, were pushed from existence ten or fifteen years earlier than they would have been, had the Revolution not taken place. It is appalling to reflect on such things, and to sum up in the imagination the miseries that ensued. But the victims of the guillotine, of the dungeons, of famine, of war, and of pestilence, are now at rest "after life's fitful fever," and what is the present state of France?—her population is 34,200,000 of souls, against 24,300,000 fifty years ago—She possesses a representative legislative system that guarantees her liberties—she has established the charter of her freedom, under a constitutional monarch, called

* Report of the "Comité de Salue Publique," 8 Aug. 1795. Barruel, vol. iv. page 443.

A sentiment approaching in atrocity to this announcement of the French demon, has been perceived, in the discussion by the organs of the dominant faction in England, on the decadence of the manufacturing interest of the country.

to the throne by the voice of the nation—she has abolished a hereditary legislative aristocracy, and attained an equalization of property by a law of inheritance, annulling the right of primogeniture—she has secured equal rights and privileges to all her citizens—she enjoys the inestimable blessings of trial by jury, liberty of the press, liberty of conscience, and religious toleration.

Her agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, have increased, and are now more flourishing than at any former period of her history; her military and naval power are as formidable as they ever were in past ages; her improvements in practical science, applied to roads and other public works, are equal to those of almost any other country, and her influence abroad is powerful enough to insure from other nations, a proper attention to her interests and her dignity.*

* Comparative Statement of the Condition of Great Britain and France .—

	Great Britain and Ireland	France
Superficies, . . . acres, 77,400,000 . . . . .	.. . . .	130,000,000
Land cultivated, . . . acres, 46,500,000 .. . . .	. . . . .	66,500,000
Produce of wheat per acre, bushels, 21 . . . . .	. . . . .	14
Population 26,800,000 . . . . .	. . . . .	34,200,000
Inhabitants per square mile 220 . . . . .	. . . . .	165
Gross amount of public revenue, £52,000,000 . . . . .	. . . . .	45,000,000
Average per head of the inhabitants, £1 19 0 . . . . .	. . . . .	£1 6 6
Direct Land Tax..... . . £1,000,000 . . . . .	. . . . .	10,000,000
	Customs . . £5,000,000	
	Salt 2,200,000	
Taxes on Consump- { Customs, } £37,000,000	Taxes on wine, spirits, tobacco, and gunpowder, 7,300,000	14,500,000
tion. . . . { Excise, }		

INTEREST OF NATIONAL DEBT.

Great Britain	France
£23,700,000	£10,200,000

Our lands, either from greater fertility or from superior husbandry, give in wheat three bushels for two of the French lands; and notwithstanding this increase, the price of wheat, flour, or bread, is generally about fifty

per cent dearer in London than Paris. How arises this amazing disparity in price? On the consumption of bread this increase will make yearly about twenty millions of pounds sterling more than if bought in Paris.

The direct land-tax in France is £10,000,000.

The direct land-tax in Great Britain is only £1,000,000

The duties on consumption of food and other articles in Great Britain and Ireland is 37,000,000. In France it is only £14,500,000.

These items explain at a glance the cause of the disparity. The twenty millions extra paid in the price of bread go to increase the rents of the lands.

France has increased in strength since her great Revolution. Great Britain is suffering in her most vital interests in consequence of the debt incurred to arrest that Revolution, and of unjust and impolitic laws imposed since the peace of 1815.

CHAP. V.

SPAIN.

THE SPANISH ARISTOCRATIC POWER HAS ALMOST ROOTED UP THE TREE OF WEALTH, IN ORDER TO SEIZE THE FRUIT.

In the present circumstances of the world, particularly in those of Europe, as affecting the position of Great Britain and Spain, it is of great importance to both these nations to weigh well the question of their mutual interest, and to take a retrospective and prospective view of their relative condition.

The people of this country must remember that Spain in the sixteenth century, and in the beginning of the seventeenth, in the general affairs of the world, held a station and exercised an influence similar to what Great Britain possesses in the present age. Circumstances gave her the lead in colonization, and enabled her to plant settlements, undisturbed by any European power, throughout the West India Islands, North and South America, and in the Indian Ocean. Her ships spread over the globe, carried her commerce from East to West, and to the uttermost bounds of the known earth. Her naval ascendancy was undisputed for a long period; and it was on the shores of Britain, that it first received the shock to its greatness. Allusions have been frequently made in the course of this treatise to the circumstances of Spain as affording examples to this country: and in referring again to that country, it is not

the design to dwell with minuteness on any incident in its history.

The northern race that poured itself into Spain, on the downfall of the Roman power, then carried with it the love of liberty and independence which characterized the Celtic and Gothic tribes. Hence the early establishment in that country of legislative representative assemblies, under the title of Cortes.

The Moors threw themselves into Spain, and occupied the greater part of the country. But the Gothic race took refuge in the mountains of the northern provinces, and there maintained themselves for ages; when at length, towards the end of the fifteenth century, the African and Asiatic races were finally destroyed, or driven from the country.

Previous to the expulsion of the Moors, the kings of Spain were politically very weak, and they had to offer liberal rewards of grants of lands and honours to the successful leaders of the expeditions against the infidels. The aristocratic order by these means acquired great power, and became, on occasions, overbearing to the sovereign himself.

The legislative body assembled in one chamber, and the popular influence was gradually overpowered by the aristocratic nature of the majority of the members that voted the laws.* The aristocracy crushed the popular representation,

and almost overruled the kingly power. This forms another instance of the ruin that results to the liberties of a people, by the legislative power being invested in *one* chamber of deputies. Ferdinand, after being freed from the danger of the Moors, succeeded, by wise and politic measures, in lowering the pretensions of the nobles, and in establishing his own authority over them.

The political dissensions of ages, the decline and partial ruin of all the great interests of Spain, can be traced to the aristocratic or exclusive principle that pervades her institutions, and dictates her laws. And as long as it is allowed to exist, so sure will decay and ruin follow the steps of contending aristocratic factions, until at length the country itself shall become the prey of some foreign people, united by the hope of conquest and location on its fertile soil.

Circumstances peculiar to Spain, have increased and extended the blasting influence of the spoliatory principle. The lands of the Mesta doomed entire regions to the state of deserts—and the dead hands of the church, and the indolent pride of aristocratic power, have combined to keep the lands untouched by the plough. The fanatical prejudices of the feeble manufacturing interest still farther damp the national enterprise, and close the ports of the nation to commerce and its civilization.

The lands from which the Moors were expelled, were divided in the usual barbaric way among a few successful warriors.

The following is the account of the division of property in Spain in the fifteenth century :—

“A great part of the territory in Spain was engrossed by the nobility. According to the account of a contemporary cultivation of saffron has supplanted that of corn, and there is therefore less occasion for windmills.”—*Inglis's Rambles in Spain*, page 61.

writer, which he affirms was as accurate as the nature of the subject would admit, the sum total of the annual revenue of their lands amounted to one million four hundred and eighty-two thousand ducats. If we make allowance for the great difference in the value of money in the fifteenth century, from that which it now bears, and consider that the catalogue of Marinæus includes only the "*Titulados*" or nobility, whose families were distinguished by some honorary title, their wealth must appear very great. The commons of Castile, in their contests with the crown, complain of the extensive property of the nobility as extremely pernicious to the kingdom. In one of their manifestoes, they assert that from Valladolid to Saint Jago, in Galicia, which was a hundred leagues, the crown did not possess more than three villages. All the rest belonged to the nobility, and could be subject to no public burden. It appears from the testimony of authors, that these extensive possessions were bestowed upon the *ricos hombres*, *hidalgos*, and *cavalleros*, by the kings of Castile, in rewards for the assistance which they had received from them in expelling the Moors. They likewise obtained by the same means, a considerable influence in the cities, many of which anciently depended upon the nobility."

The foregoing description is extrated from the notes and illustrations to Dr. Robertson's History of the State of Europe, and of the Reign of Charles the Fifth of Spain.*

The same author says, in another part of the history:—"It was one of the privileges of the nobles, that their lands were exempt from the burden of taxes. The charge of supporting the troops requisite for the public safety, fell wholly upon the cities; and their kings being obliged frequently to apply to them for aid, found it necessary to

* Vol. I, page 419, Note 34.

gain their favour by concessions, which not only extended their immunities, but added to their wealth and power."

There are materials for reflection, afforded by the historical facts adduced, and they ought to be applied to form a parallel with the state of Great Britain at the present day. The grand characteristics in each nation, in the two periods of the history, are the enormous amount of property acquired by an exclusive order, at the expense of the community, and the almost exemption of that property from the burdens of taxation, while the rest of the citizens are charged with the expenses of the general government. There is, however, this great difference between the two nations at their respective periods. The British people are a comparatively very united one, and, with the exception of Ireland, are free from the danger of local or provincial jealousies and animosities. They are confiding, and hence the weight of their burdens. But, unless their physical and intellectual construction be changed entirely, it is against their known qualities, that they will long submit to a state of things which will sink the nation to the depths of wretchedness, and ruin all its hopes of future greatness.

We at all times perceive in society the operation of principles which shall produce changes for good or evil; and in the chronicles of the day, we read the narration of events, the origin and tendency of which are not obvious to every observer.

Spain, within these last fifty years, has presented an epitome of her history for a thousand years before—always agitated and torn by domestic factions, fomented by the foreigner.

Barcelona yet smokes with the fires which her insurrection kindled; and the sound of the bombardment which laid her in ruins, still dwells on the ear of Europe.

The diplomacy of Britain and France is occupied in the adjustment of the questions which have arisen out of events that partake of the character belonging to barbarous ages; and men endeavour to trace them to the intrigues of foreign agents, or to the rivalries of domestic political leaders. But these events have their origin from causes which lie deep in society, and the following appears to be a true account of the moving springs of these, and all the other convulsions which disturb Spain. "Several other causes have contributed to render the military unpopular in Barcelona. In the present dilapidated state of Spanish finances, each locality is obliged in a great measure to support garrisons: and the municipality, instead of taxing the wealthy householders, is too apt to grind the money from the poor, by duties levied on provisions at the gates of the town. *It was this hated Octroi which began the present insurrection.*" . . . "We observe that Zurbano had been visiting the posts, and enjoining the custom-house men to use the utmost rigour in levying duties, saying he would forgive past faults, but would severely punish all fresh acts of indulgence." . . . "The city is becoming troubled, no one knowing why; for quarrels between collectors of the duty and country people to introduce wine, were wont to take place every holiday." We see in this description, given in the leading article of the London Morning Chronicle of the 26th November, 1842, the development of principles which lead to the revolution of nations,—namely, the encroachment on, or seizure of, the means of subsistence of a people, to an extent which destroys their comfort, and enrages their feelings to outbreaks from the bounds of order. Will men ever learn wisdom, to be true and just to themselves!

CHAP. VI.

RUSSIA.

ARISTOCRACY RESTRAINS DESPOTISM FROM RAISING A BODY OF SERFS TO
THE CONDITION OF FREE CITIZENS

RUSSIA is an empire, that, like a huge Colossus, bestrides Europe and Asia. It consists of a body, of limbs, and a head. Its head is an intellectual personal despotism, controlling a rude aristocracy, that crushes a nation of slaves.

Russia is a body of vast magnitude, but it wants a principle of motion and activity ; it is inert—but it keeps Europe in dread of its receiving an impulse. Heavy bodies are not easily moved, but motion once given, the effect is tremendous.

Agrarian laws, similar to those of Moses, or of Servius Tullius, enacted in favour of the Russian population, would, in all probability, change the destiny of the world. They would, in half a generation, raise a population from the condition of miserable hordes of serfs, dull and passive like the cattle that graze around them, to the rank of freemen, possessed of property in the soil from which they raised their subsistence. The military tenure, which doubtless would be attached to their lands, would convert legions of armed animal machines into bands and armies of militia,

ready to defend their acquisitions, or march in search of fresh conquests, at the command of some ambitious leader.

To realize this state of things, it only requires a brave, intelligent, and patriotic monarch, to step down from his throne—put himself at the head of his countrymen—call around him a national council—and proceed to assign property, and proclaim liberty, to all. In this enterprise he would probably lose his life, through means familiar to Asiatic revolutions; but this would not give much concern to a brave man—ambitious of historical immortality, as the liberator and benefactor of his oppressed countrymen.

The character of the present monarch, and the circumstances in which he has already been placed towards the aristocratic body of his empire, make even the realization of the magnificent conception within the range of possibility.*

The very suggestion of a plan which might bring, on western and southern Europe, an armed migration from the northern regions, is startling. But the idea ought to have its weight with nations and their governments, and, in anticipation of any such danger, the government of every country in Europe should see its interests and safety identified with the comfort, prosperity, and wealth of the great body of the people.

A people possessed of some property in the country they inhabit, are the fittest to repel an invasion, however formidable, of semibarbarians who rush on with the desire of acquiring possessions.

* "The interference of the Crown between the lord and the serf, is, however, resented with intense animosity by an Aristocracy, which stands itself in a servile relation to the Crown; and all the excesses of arbitrary power will be more easily forgiven to an Emperor of Russia, than the employment of that power for the relief of the lowest class of his subjects" *Leading Article of the Times of 18th May, 1842*

CHAP. VII.

ARISTOCRACY AND DEMOCRACY COMPARED.

THE PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY ARE PRESERVATIVE—THE PRINCIPLES OF ARISTOCRACY ARE DESTRUCTIVE AND SPOLIATORY—ARISTOCRACY IS TO DEMOCRACY WHAT A UNIT IS TO A MILLION.

THE general history of the Roman people offers to modern nations lessons rather on what is to be shunned and deprecated, than examples to be imitated, in the conduct of public affairs. The wild declamation on Roman transactions, uttered by the French orators, in the first stages of the great French Revolution, and the mummeries which were enacted by the actors in that fearful drama, in imitation of passages in the history of the Roman republic, have inflicted a severe wound on the people of Europe, and have thrown back the cause of rational liberty. Governments, whether under the personal despotism of a monarch, or under the control of an aristocracy, took the alarm, and during these last fifty years have been incessantly active, through means of legislation, and the agency of the press, to establish and diffuse the opinion, that the great mass of the population of every country is actuated by a desire, or rather passion, to change laws, overthrow institutions, and seize on the property of the wealthy classes of society. And so successful have their efforts been to disseminate these opinions, and create alarm in the minds

of the timid, that men really now seem to live in terror of their own species.

One of the greatest errors which the present generation has committed in considering the events of the Great French Revolution, and one almost universally entertained, is that of charging the French people, or laying on Democracy, the responsibility of the atrocities inflicted on person and property, during the progress of the Revolution, from the execution of Louis XVI., to the establishment of the military power of Napoleon. The massacres by the guillotine, and the confiscations and seizures of property, were the acts of an Aristocracy, of the most exaggerated, and even demoniacal, character; and if the populace of Paris and other cities were roused to action, they were merely the instruments wielded by the hands of the clubs, or the exclusive associations. Danton explained in a brief sentence the whole secret of that terrible power, that for a while held princes, priests, and people under the sword: "*We are few in number—we must show no mercy for the sake of liberty, to those who are opposed to us.*"

It is a monstrous untruth, and a libel on human nature, to assert that there is a disposition in the great majority of the people of any country, to destroy or to appropriate the possessions of the minority.* The evidence of history in

* It would be a happy thing for nations, were a more destructive propensity to prevail in the great mass of mankind. The world would not then behold the plunderings, the seizures, and the spoiliations of aristocratic bodies practised on the passive multitude; nor would heaven be outraged by the daring hypocrisy of priesthood standing between man and the Deity; the poor mortal delivering, with a submissive air, his corn and the firstlings of his flocks, to feed the luxury of worldly ecclesiastics. Were such a disposition to exist to a moderate extent, the first approach of a spoliative power would be checked by those intended to be made the victims.

every country on the globe, for five thousand years, proves the contrary. Could society exist for a month anywhere with such a disposition in the majority? Impossible—there would ensue a wild uproar, and in a violent but brief struggle mankind would perish from the earth. What protects the large heaps of property of every kind, lying exposed, or but nominally secured by thin partitions, in towns and cities, but the indisposition of men to encroach on their neighbours or their property?

The twenty-eight thousand criminals who found their way into the jails of the United Kingdom, in the year 1841, formed an infinitesimal minority of the British people. And so it is with the people of every nation. The vast majority of men are disposed to be honest, peaceable, and orderly, and all that they want is to be left alone and undisturbed in the possession of what God and nature have assigned to them. Men will naturally be satisfied with their lot, as long as anything like fair play be shown to them, and they are always reluctant to rouse themselves to action, in order to redress their grievances.—The events of history are generally grossly misrepresented; and, wherever a people worn out by vexatious proceedings, and starved by a cruel and rapacious governing power, rouse themselves to recover their own, they are cut down like dogs in the streets, or tried as rebels, and branded as traitors. The struggles by the Roman people against the Aristocracy, had not for their object the confiscation and appropriation of the possessions of the patricians; but were truly and simply to recover the lands that really belonged to the people, but which had been seized by the men who held the power of the state.

The knowledge of this peaceable disposition, inherent in the great mass of mankind, leads to and encourages the

usurpation over them of a small number of individuals, who first seize the property, and then monopolize the power, of the community. It is well to state distinctly and broadly, that all those popular convulsions which have taken place in countries, and led to a new balance of property, and a complete change of power, arose from the oppression exercised by selfish and unjust governments driving the people to despair. It is against the nature of things, for a great multitude deliberately to concert and execute a plan of general spoliation; but it will be seen from the whole range of history, that forcible possession, insidious encroachment, and indirect confiscation of property, have been the work of a small number of persons.* In this consists the great danger of hereditary aristocratic government to the interests and happiness of the mass of the people. But before proceeding farther, it may be well to define the meaning which is here given to the word Aristocracy.

No stress is laid on that arrogance and assumption of importance, peculiar to the members of an aristocratic order; nor are titles and other appendages to rank taken into account. People have a right to their own opinions, and may designate themselves Dukes of the Setting Sun, or Marquises of the Seven Stars, or Lords of the Golden Horns, if they think proper so to do. All these things are perfectly harmless, and may even be useful.

It would form a curious chapter in the history of mankind, to bring together all the various titles of nobility and personal decorations conferred on distinguished individuals.

* A band of highwaymen is more formidable to a vicinity, when it is composed of a few resolute and desperate men, than when it consists of a large number. In the first case there is greater secrecy and unity of design, and the property and lives of peaceable citizens are more exposed, and at the mercy of the robbers. In a multitude, there is the chance of a "split" among the depredators, by which honest men gain, and justice is more likely to be satisfied.

All tribes and nations, from the rudest up to the most refined, have had their orders of merit. The laurel-wreath of the ancient Greeks and Romans was considered an ornament for the head of a conqueror, and now the laurel crown is a poetical image which enriches the language of every people. Feathers, grease, and paint are the ornaments of noble savages—ribbons and medals are the decorations among civilized men—gold and silver buttons and sticks, are also used as marks of distinction; but the ornament considered the greatest honour, in a very powerful and enlightened nation, is *a blue velvet ligature for tying up the stocking of the left leg.*

No titles or orders of merit are allowed by the American Republicans, and in this prohibition they act unwisely, because for want of some rational plan of honorary civic or political character, they are fostering the most pernicious of all aristocratic nominal distinction—those of military rank. The burden of every tourist's notes on the United States, is on the wonder of Generals, Colonels, and Majors being keepers of taverns, and such like concerns. Reason cannot be brought to bear on such a question, but it is seen that in all ages, and in every nation, men, even the wisest and bravest, have set a great value on certain names and toys. Nelson was sustained in that great conflict in which he lost his life, by the hope of having his name inscribed in the national temple which contains the ashes of great men.

How many brilliant exploits, by sea and land, in the service of their country, have been performed by men in expectation of these honorary rewards! Their valour is the more disinterested, and ought therefore to be the more admired.

Johnson defines the word "Aristocracy" to be, "that form of government, which places the supreme power in the nobles, without a king, and exclusively of the people."

This definition may do for schoolmen, but it will not serve for practical men, who take lessons from history. In ancient Rome, the government was in the hands of an Aristocracy, without a king, but the people were not excluded. In modern Sweden, there was a King and an Aristocracy, but the latter was so grasping, as to deprive the people of their privileges, and to make the sovereign himself a mere president of the senate, that engrossed for itself all the authority of the state. The people, to get quit of the intolerable yoke, surrendered their liberties into the hands of the king, and preferred living under an absolute monarch, to being crushed by aristocratic power. Perhaps the only government which answers the description, was that of Venice; it was a pure Aristocracy—for there was no king—as the Doge was merely the mouthpiece of the senate, and the people were excluded; and not only excluded from participation in any part of public business, but condemned to live in distrust of secret spies, and in terror of dungeons, racks, and poniards, and all the other horrors embodied in the Spanish Inquisition. France had its King, Aristocracy, and People: and the blood in which its history is written, displays the horrors that ensue from a long course of Aristocratic exactions, working on an excitable and energetic population. The British nation has also its Sovereign, Aristocracy, and People; and history has yet to record the events which shall issue from the struggle that is at present going on, to restore to the people the subsistence, of which a system of partial, unjust, and impolitic laws has so long deprived them.

An Aristocracy may be defined to be,—a body of individuals who are in possession of large properties, and who, by prescription or law, enjoy peculiar privileges and a certain control, in their collective capacity, over the property

and liberties of the rest of their fellow-countrymen. These privileges and power may either descend hereditarily, or they may be transferred by the present holders to other persons, to fill up vacancies in the order. The British aristocratic legislative power is hereditary, and vacancies by the extinction of families, and new seats, may be filled by the Sovereign, who can at discretion add to the number of the Aristocracy. But, according to the meaning given to the word by the above definition, those beautiful illustrations of the aristocratic principle, shown in the Scotch municipal corporations that existed as late as in the year 1832, were pure Aristocracies, very nearly approaching to hereditary. It is true, that the portly country-butcher, or the polished city-haberdasher, who enjoyed the very many good things which the office of baillie put in his power, was not so sure of leaving the magisterial robes to Son Thomas, or to Nephew Andrew, as the Peer is of knowing that his title and legislative genius will go in the right line to his son Lord John. But yet, in the cannie aristocratic boroughs of former times, there was such a kindly feeling between the men of the proper stamp—such a mutual understanding—that Thomas and Andrew in regular course appeared at the council-board, and voted, with all the gravity of senators, some municipal tax to be paid by their townsmen, who had no control whatever over the proceedings of those self-elected legislators, and still less over the money raised from the citizens. The British legislative Aristocracy opposed with the utmost vehemence the abolition of such a system ; which confirms the identity of principle that exists between the two orders of imperial and borough Aristocracy.

The aristocratic principle is also acted on in those boards of directors of certain joint-stock companies, at

which the same men, or their nominees, are seen seated year after year, and perhaps obstinately persevere in measures of an equivocal nature.

Colonial Aristocracies in British settlements are generally of the most rampant character. The system of free grants of land to dependents or favourites of the home-ministry, bestowed perhaps for some party services, or to enrich some poor relation of a minister, has established a body of men in possession of a large quantity of public property; and the spirit of the order often rises to a pitch of sublimity, in the colonial legislative councils.

As in water face answereth to face, so do men in aristocratic or irresponsible bodies; in the most out-of-the-way corners of the world, we discern the same features. In Guatemala, Mr. Stephens thus describes the "*nobility*" of that country: "The central (or aristocratic) party consisted of a few leading families, which, by reason of certain privileges of monopoly for importations, under the old Spanish government, assumed the tone of nobles, sustained by the priests and friars, and by the religious feeling of the country." * These "*nobles*" wished to preserve the usages of the colonial system, and resisted every innovation that might encroach upon the privileges of the church, or interfere with their own interests or prejudices. They wanted to retain to themselves the importation of merchandise—the making of laws—and the filling of the offices of the church; and the people were to take just what was offered to them, or go without anything.

It is remarked of corporate bodies, that the individuals who compose them, give their assent to measures, or acts, which they would shrink from performing, on their own single responsibility. The men, individually, may be very

* See Stephens' Central America, vol. i. p. 195

upright persons, and have a full average quantity of the milk of human kindness in them, but yet experience every day proves to us, that the result or tendency of the acts of deliberative bodies of men, is often very different from that course of action which, probably, three-fourths or nine-tenths of the members would follow, were they to act independently. This is a curious property in human nature ; and appears to be designed by Providence, to warn us against the danger of entrusting irresponsible power to a number of men, who shall meet together, year after year, —talk over and discuss matters—warp statements from the true bias—heat each other's minds—bandy fallacies from one to another—keep all the time in view some particular interest to be promoted or depressed—and end by passing a law, which, in its effects, shall be spoliatory, and of course unjust to many millions of their fellow-citizens.

In illustration of this, let a hypothetical case be put :— Suppose that, at a particular time, a change should take place in the circumstances of a country, which from the nature of things must be of incalculable advantage to its inhabitants ; and imagine this case to be the termination of a long and severe war, and the transition to a state of universal peace. But, a small portion of the people, to whom are intrusted the making of laws, find that their property is for a time depreciated by the change of circumstances ; and, in order to keep up its value, to enable the proprietors to live in their usual style, a law is passed, which in its effects, is neither more nor less than a tax on the food, namely bread and meat, consumed by every individual, man, woman, and child, throughout the country ; and, from the nature of the society in which this occurs, the most hard-working and poorest classes of the inhabitants are the heaviest taxed. It will at once appear incredible, that any

class of human beings, however poor and abject, should submit to such a nefarious imposition, but the thing is so contrived, that the tax is concealed from the consumer, in the price which he pays to the baker and butcher : and on the other hand, the receivers of the tax get their respective proportions in a disguised shape from the farmers, in the rents paid for the use of the lands. It is not an easy matter to form a sliding scale of the exact sums, which the legislative landowners are supposed to put into their pockets, or into their bankers' books, derived from this tax ; but whether they be five hundred pounds or fifty thousand pounds each, it may be confidently stated, that very few of those landowners would venture to collect, in a direct manner, the tax, to make up their respective shares. The nerves of the strongest man, even supposing he had the disposition to collect the quota that belonged to him, would utterly fail him in the attempt.

Who could enter the dwelling of the plain, hard-working man, with a demand of a tax on his food, for the purposes stated in the hypothesis ? who could stand for one instant in that wretched hovel, and be able to subdue the feelings on making the iniquitous charge of a rate to diminish still more the scanty provision of the coarsest food to sustain the unhappy inmates ?

The collector, struck with remorse at the enormity of the demand, would dash the pittance, wrung from the miserable beings, to the ground, and rush from the scene of his rapacity. Events will show how near this suppositious case comes to the realities of life.

A despot, however cruel and long-lived, dies at last, and the probability is, that a better and wiser man will succeed him in the exercise of power. As the vast majority of men are disposed to do good, a country derives the advantage of

this disposition in the majority of its sovereigns; and a man, though biased towards evil, will naturally try to act well on taking the place of a bad predecessor. Even a harsh temper, and a selfish disposition, in a despotic ruler, will be smoothed down and gratified by the happiness and prosperity of his subjects. A tyrant instinctively perceives his own interests identified with those of his people; but there stands between the monarch and his subjects, a body of men, who encroach on the latter, and gradually control the former, so as to make him their tool. Even a despot, possessed of more than ordinary Asiatic power, becomes helpless when his measures interfere with the privileges of his Aristocracy: he may indulge his caprices in slaughtering by thousands his inferior vassals, but he dare not attempt to improve their condition, if, by doing so, the interests, or even the prejudices, of his great men are touched. The fair and modest Vashti was sacrificed at the instigation of the princes of Ahasuerus, because her refusal to expose herself to their gaze at the royal banquet, when commanded, might, by the example, encourage the ladies of Persia to assume an independence not agreeable to their noble lords and masters. And the same Ahasuerus, the very concentration of Eastern despotism, was the passive instrument, in the hands of one of his creatures, to sign an order to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, a considerable portion of his subjects, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, in order to gratify the jealousy, spite, and revenge of his courtiers.

But to come down to our own time—we have the present Emperor of all the Russias, thwarted and threatened by his Aristocracy, because he wishes to free from their thralldom the unfortunate serfs of his country, and raise them in the scale of society.

And in this country, the kindly disposition of the patriot King William the Fourth, was for a season neutralized, by the obstinate resistance of the aristocratic body, in his attempts to support his countrymen in acquiring liberty.

The individuals that compose an Aristocracy die, but the order survives, and, unless curbed by a spirited and enlightened people, becomes more and more consolidated, till it crushes beneath its weight every interest in the state, and brings the population to be divided into two sections,—one a small number, possessed of the property and the power of the country—the other, the great mass, fearfully contrasting, in their poverty, ignorance, restlessness, and despair, with the magnificence, luxury, and reckless bearing of the minority.

An elective legislative Aristocracy has resting-points, at which the people can periodically exercise some influence; but a hereditary legislative power spreads and dovetails itself into the very frame-work of society. Were all the individuals to die in the same years, the country would have at the end of regular periods, a new set of men to enter upon their legislative duties.

It would appear that in 1830, out of the whole population of England and Wales, one death took place in fifty-eight persons, but in ten years from that date the mortality had increased to one death in about forty-five persons.

When the law of a country confers upon a class of the people, the gift or talent of legislation by inheritance, bountiful nature appears to add longevity beyond the lot of ordinary mortals. This remarkable fact is established by the bills of mortality. Indeed, the longevity of hereditary legislators is notorious. This is accounted for by the extremely comfortable circumstances in which the members are born, and live throughout an existence apparently placed above

care and sorrow. While the rest of their countrymen are getting a shorter allowance of life, the law guarantees that the survivors shall not want a generation of law-makers always ready at hand. Out of a hereditary legislative assembly of 490 members, at the rate of one death for every sixty persons, we shall have a fraction more than eight deaths in a year, and of course eight new men to fill up the vacancies.* But as opinions and views of aristocratic interests are hereditary, as well as titles and legislative virtues, it thus happens that by the death of one member and the accession of another, there is no break in the legislative net, which extends, generation after generation, drawing within its meshes every thing and person considered fit and proper to be retained.

An aristocratic body, of any of the categories enumerated, necessarily consists of a comparatively small number of persons, united firmly together by mutual interest and by that strongest of all ties—a feeling, or opinion of self-importance as members of a society, in possession of privileges which the rest of the community do not enjoy. In a political Aristocracy, there are grades, which, though marking an inequality among the members, really serve to unite and attract them to a centre. This principle of union is best explained by analogy: it is said that mackerel are caught by a piece of red rag used as bait, and a whole shoal will compete for the tempting prize; and so it is with the crowd of aristocrats, who will support their order, and advocate its interests, for the reward of a strip of a red or blue ribbon.

An Aristocracy is continually endeavouring to impress on the world a belief, that to it belong exclusively the talents and virtues necessary for the government of the state—that

* In the year 1840, I find that eight Peers departed this life.

it is the true and legitimate founder of every thing that is great and good in the laws and institutions of the country,—that it is the only proper guardian of these laws and institutions—and it is incessantly active in inculcating and maintaining the idea, by bold assertion, or by insinuation, that the great body of the people are destructively disposed towards the institutions, laws, and properties of the country ; and that it would be attended with the greatest danger, to entrust the people with a share in the government.

A governing Aristocracy spouts itself into a false eloquence, on the ignorance, vices, and poverty of the people, as disqualifying them to judge, or to act, in public affairs ; and yet an Aristocracy, either lay or theocratic, never of its own free will takes measures for the education and improvement of the people.*

As timid people of property are very apt to be influenced by the outcry, that property would be endangered by extending political power more widely among the citizens, it will be well to examine the subject more closely ; and it will be perceived that, as far as history goes, the danger to

* See the miserable schemes, and still more miserable sums, voted for the purposes of the education of so many millions of souls in Great Britain and Ireland Since the above was written, a fact has come to the knowledge of the Author, which speaks volumes on the system in this country A subscription is solicited by the Scotch National Church, Crown Court, Covent Garden, to provide common and religious education for the children of persons in connection with the National Church ; and before a shilling can be appropriated to the real objects of the charity, the large sum of £500 must be paid over to the Duke of Bedford, as the fine or premium on the lease of a few hundred square yards of ground for the school-house ; and this noble person, no doubt, exacts the uttermost farthing fixed in the bond. Yet he supports a tax on the industrious citizens, out of which he votes a sum for the education of their children, scarcely amounting to as much as is expended on Her Majesty's hounds. And mark, also—his own property escapes untaxed !

property arises from the efforts of a small number to possess it, and not from a mass of people. A small number can consult and agree on a plan of operations, and by union and secrecy can put in execution their schemes, till they end in almost a general encroachment on the interests of the mass of the people, scarcely aware of the fact, until it is discovered by the decrease or loss of property. A large quantity of land, or other property, if portioned among a multitude, would be perhaps sufficient for their subsistence, and even comfortable independence, in families; but if appropriated by a small number of persons, would form princely fortunes to each; and, in the latter case, the multitude would become the dependents or slaves of those who seized the lands. This describes the origin of most of the nations on the globe. The violence and cunning of the few, overpowered the weak, *because* disunited, multitude.

It certainly would be more consonant with the dictates of reason and nature, that every family should at the outstart be enabled to subsist itself, than that a few families should have large properties at the expense of the rest. An equitable division ought to be made at first, and afterwards to leave to the superior industry and abilities of individuals to increase their property. But this plan does not suit the aristocratic spirit, or rather, it is quite opposed to it, and therefore large quantities of property in few hands are preferred to the system of every one having enough. The principle, once admitted and acted upon, continues in vigour during the progress of society. In the changes which take place, the mass of the people must improve in condition, even in spite of every drawback; and in some countries, the people are so active and intelligent, as gradually to outgrow the aristocratic party, with all its power and advantages. But, in the early stages of improve-

ment, the governing aristocratic party continue by various means to augment their property, in order to keep pace with the citizens advancing to wealth and influence. The eye of the aristocratic power is keen and penetrating, and its hand is ever ready to seize its prey. It is always borne in mind, and the principle enforced wherever possible, that property divided among many, falls in a small lot to each individual, but, if secured for a few, will enable the possessors to increase their enjoyments, and extend their influence over their fellow-citizens. This is done under plausible pretexts, and so insidious is the system of spoliation, that the effect is perhaps not observed till long after the mischief is done. A volume could be filled with an account of the encroachments of the Aristocracy on the property of the people.

The theocratic branch of an Aristocratic order is the most rapacious, and appears to exult in the exhibition of a bare-faced disregard of the rights of humanity—the cry has ever been “Give flesh to roast for the priest—but thou shalt give it me now, and if not I will take it by force.” Such is the language held at this very day in Christian England and Ireland, and the wealth that is thus wrung from many millions of men to support a hierarchy which their conscience condemns, is appropriated to swell the fortunes of a few dignitaries, instead of being applied to afford a comfortable subsistence to the men who carry the consolations of religion to the poor and broken-hearted.

Foreigners come to our land, and write of its “glory and its shame.”* They point to its glory as resting on the virtue of its people, preserved amidst privations altogether unparalleled, and borne with a patient fortitude, which excites the

* See an American publication on England, under the title of the “*Glory and Shame of England.*”

astonishment of the very men, whose policy and laws, in the State and Church, constitute its "shame."

Whenever a charitable or public fund begins to swell to an amount worthy of notice, then is the moment of danger to it. How comes it, that all the universities and wealthy public schools, are now almost exclusively appropriated to the uses of the Aristocracy? A fund perhaps was bequeathed for the purposes of education, and would be sufficient probably to afford instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic, to all the children in a village or town—but of what use is knowledge to the children of people who must labour for subsistence, and the funds are forthwith devoted to educate the sons of the men who are the employers of the village folks, and the law-makers and priests for the rest of the community? On tracing to the origin, and following the progress of aristocratic power to consolidation, it will be perceived that a principle of encroachment and spoliation has been perseveringly pursued.* This is asserted as in the nature of things, and not uttered in a declamatory or party spirit. Almost the whole system of modern taxation rests on the principle of encroachment on the property of the masses, in order to collect a fund, it may be, for the public service, or for objects of aristocratic aggrandizement. And when a loss must be sustained, the amount is thrown off the few, to fall on the thousands, as was experienced in the calling in the gold-coinage of light weight.† Neither the

* In the British legislation there is a sensitiveness evinced in all its proceedings touching property, which is to be seen in no other legislative body. There is a sacredness attempted to be thrown on every question affecting the rights of property in present tenure, which really seems to imply a consciousness of a weakness of title by which property is held.

† Money article of *Times*, 20th June, 1842:—"Last Saturday, when the different operatives were paid their wages, there was such a general panic among the humbler classes in different parts of London, that even good

Government nor the Bank of England was willing to bear the loss.

Aristocratic schemes of spoliation, and conspiracies to acquire possession of property, are of course very different in their mode of operation in different countries. Every thing depends on the circumstances of the country, and the character of its people—their general occupation—their customs—and, above all, the state of their civilization. Among a semibarbarous people, open violence or undisguised fraud is resorted to; but in civilized nations, the ends are gained by means of false representation of the people, and of laws passed to favour and extend the interests of the governing faction at the cost of the rest of the citizens.

In the Roman history, there occurs one remarkable instance of an attempt, by a section of the aristocratic party, to seize the property of the citizens, and to throw the whole country into the horrors of civil convulsion. The author and leader of this infamous plot was Cataline, whose name is now, in all languages, synonymous with everything dark and atrocious. His scheme is by eminence denominated *The Conspiracy*. It was not so much a project to change the form of government, and to introduce a new order of things, as an attempt, by the most profligate of the Roman Aristocracy, to involve the country in the horrors of massacre and plunder, so that the performers might get quit of their debts, and enrich themselves with the spoils of the citizens. "For more than a year it was known that a part of the highest functionaries had entered into a league with the

sovereigns were not taken by some of the small shopkeepers, without some allowance, (say 6d.) to guarantee them from loss.

"There are classes, among which it is in vain to hope for the possession of a pair of scales; and yet the misfortune is, that whilst they are the most helpless classes of all, they and the retail tradesmen, alone pay the national loss arising from the deficiency in the weight of the sovereign "

most desperate of the rabble; that they had their cut-throat conclaves in the city, and that Cataline even aspired to become consul.* We however live in happier times than those that gave birth to such designs.

I have stated, that it is a libel on human nature to assert that there is a disposition, in the great majority of mankind, to destroy or appropriate the possessions of the minority. This proposition may not be directly affirmed, but it is clearly implied in the arguments used, by the possessors and favourers of aristocratic power, against the extension of the suffrage to the great body of the people. The assertion, or insinuation, goes the length of making the people not only to be wicked, but also stupid. Supposing that there did exist a disposition in the great mass of mankind, to seize on the large properties belonging to the minority the people would at first consider in what way the spoliation should be effected, and, after the property had been seized, how it should be divided among the multitude.

In a very populous country, even with enormous wealth in the possession of certain classes of the population, it would be found, that when each individual or family got his share, the amount would be scarcely worth the risk and trouble of the division. Everything would be unsettled, and every person put out of his place, and in a few years great inequalities in fortunes would again appear. As it is impossible to conceive, that the original possessors of the property would relinquish the hold of it without a violent struggle; the supposition of the apportionment of the property among the great mass of the people, implies the operation of some extraordinary power to effect the division,—either by a miracle, through a second Moses, or by some great conqueror, from a foreign country, seizing by violence all the property of the conquered territory, and

* Lardner's Rome.

dividing it anew among the people, in proportion to their families, in order to reconcile them to their conqueror, and make them support his government and dynasty. Out of these two cases, every person capable of reasoning must know, that property could only be taken by an impetuous rush of a multitude upon the small number of proprietors; and that, in the confusion, every one would seize hold of what he could get, and the consequence would be, that the boldest and strongest among the multitude, would, at the termination of the struggle, be the possessors, in the stead of the men who first held the property. The result would be little more than a change of hands, but with a great uproar and confusion in bringing about the change.

To the great numbers of individuals living in crowded towns and cities, in destitution and misery, the idea of the possession of a comfortable competency, from a fine estate in the neighbourhood, must be one of delight; especially when their minds are irritated by the sight of abundance, and every luxury enjoyed by persons who, with this contrast in circumstances, perhaps look down without compassion on their wretched neighbours.

But these crowds of poverty-stricken men know, that, supposing a division were to be made, the property could only be obtained through a scramble for it among all as miserable as themselves. Now, the horror of a scramble is much more general in the great majority of men, than a disposition, even among a minority of them, to seize violently the property of others. Although man is a gregarious animal, there is yet in his nature a repugnance to have a scramble for anything. One cannot explain why, but most persons experience a sensation of dread on entering a crowd; there is a vague apprehension of danger in doing so, distinct from that to the pocket; panics are easily raised

when people are crowded together, and they are seen running away without knowing for what. This is not instinct, but it is the effect of experience acquired from infancy to age. Children in the nursery, boys at school, and men in masses, learn, by cuffs, blows, wounds, and death, to dread a scramble for anything of value, which may be thrown among them. Among a group of children, it is that robust urchin, with a face like the full-moon, who tears and shoves aside his companions, and collects for his own share, more than half of the sugar-plums which should form a feast for the whole. In the playground of the school, half-a-dozen of active, athletic, bold fellows, with keen eyes, and features sharpened by study in their class, and by exercise out of doors, pick up more pence or marbles, scrambled for on a holiday, than any fifty or hundred boys of quiet, passive, or reflective characters.

In that scene which took place, lately in the streets of one of our large cities, there was a scramble of the most fearful and melancholy nature. A procession of artisans, who could get no employment, perambulated the streets in hopes of rousing the compassion of the citizens, when a benevolent individual took them to a baker's shop, to supply them with bread : a rush and a scramble for the loaves took place, during which the charitable distributor was in danger of his life from the eagerness of the hungry multitude to secure his bounty !*

* Horrible scramble at the Earthquake in St Domingo, 7th May, 1842 —
“ The work of pillage commenced on a small scale, but in twenty-four hours the country people began to flock in, and in forty-eight hours the town was full. Along the Bord de la Mer, one might see the plunderers cutting and stabbing each other over their spoil. Great numbers have been killed. . . The town is in a most pitiable state—not one habitable house in it; no provisions, the dead in a great part unburied, save the sepulture the

It thus appears that there is a strong, and almost general repugnance, to a division of property by a scramble : the exception is to be found among the bold, the bad, and the enterprising, who would be sure of getting the lion's share. Those popular outbreaks, which sometimes take place, are the ebullitions of passion, roused by injustice and tyrannical conduct on the part of the governing power ; or the prejudices of a people are perhaps grossly offended, so as to cause the people to act violently. These times of excitement and bursts of violence are no more indicative of the natural disposition of the multitude, than the delirium and acts of a man in a fever are to be taken as denoting his usual temper and conduct.

Perhaps the only instance of a deliberately formed and matured plan for the seizure and appropriation of property by conspirators, was that carried on by Cataline and his band of aristocratical ruffians.

As respects the great mass of the British population, there are no symptoms of any disposition towards spoliation. Their exertions are directed to free themselves from the intolerable effects of a system which is spoliatory of their own property, inasmuch as it checks their industry, restricts their employment, and taxes in every shape the fruits of their labour. Let them alone, to work for their own subsistence as they can best procure it, and accumulate their savings for their families, and they will not interfere with the property of any man, however wealthy and powerful. The love of property is one of the strongest and most enduring passions in man, and the idea of property seems to be one of the earliest conceived by the human mind.

ruins have afforded , a danger of pestilence , and a total disorganization, of the people "—Extract from letter from Dr Daly, dated Cape Haytien, 12th May, 1842. *See Times, 2d July*

The infant before he leaves his mother's arms, seems to have formed the idea that the coral that hangs round his neck belongs to *him*, and will cry bitterly, or grasp eagerly the toy, if one tries to deprive him of it. In the aged and dying, the love of property is often painfully witnessed.

This attachment that every man has to his own property, forms a good guarantee for the security of that of others. In one sense, the owner of a humble dwelling with a small plot of ground attached, would not exchange it for another property of much greater value : who can estimate, but the owner, the value which early associations, which labour, anxiety, perhaps danger, have bestowed on what he possesses? If ever a government really and truly representing the British people be established, its first and last care will be that every man may, if disposed, have a fair chance of acquiring some property. Almost the only property which vast numbers possess are their limbs, and the abilities which God has given them ; and if bad and impolitic laws restrain the industrious classes from a free exercise of those limbs and talents, what is the effect but an encroachment on their property?

In a Democracy, where every man has some voice or influence in the public affairs, of what use would it be to the individuals who compose the community to disturb the social fabric by splitting property which had accumulated in the hands of a small portion of the population, among a great multitude? The interest of every man would make him regard the interests and rights of others, hence, a perfect balance would be preserved. But this strict regard to mutual interest would be a complete check on any section of the people combining to encroach on the property and rights of the majority ; and it is the impracticability of carrying into effect a system of spoliation, where

a people exercise a proper control over their legislature and government, that makes a popular preponderance in a country so obnoxious to and so dreaded by an Aristocracy. Whenever the aristocratic or exclusive principle becomes active and strong, the property of the mass of the people is in danger, and will as certainly in the course of time slide from them, and accumulate in other hands, as the waters of the lake will disappear and leave dry its bed, when they are drawn off by drains into fish-ponds, or other artificial reservoirs. A large extension of the suffrage in this country, accompanied with a proper safeguard to the voters in giving their votes conscientiously, would at once be the means of checking the encroachment of the aristocratic or monopolizing party; but it would assuredly lead to no system of general spoliation by the people.

The United States of North America are under a government of pure Representative Democracy; and the occurrences which have recently taken place in that country, have formed subjects of declamation to parties in Great Britain, who consider Democracy as tending to destructive measures. The almost universal insolvency of banks and joint-stock companies, and, above all, the repudiation of public debt by some debtor-state, have excited distrust, and roused feelings of indignation, not only in this country, but throughout Europe, against such reckless proceedings. It is not, however, the design here to enter into an explanation of those transactions, or to attempt to defend the character of the actors and abettors in them. The transactions alluded to have, in every sense of the word, been disgraceful to the Americans; and all that is aimed at in these observations is, to clear the system or principle of Democracy from the shame of having given rise or encouragement to them. As there are, unfortunately, so many

sufferers in this country by the failure of banks and federal governments in America, there is attached to the subject much painful feeling. But in the United States the distress has been universal, and there is scarcely an individual there, however humble, who has not been injured in his circumstances and comfort by the great financial revolution. This being assumed, it is therefore against every principle of human nature to assert that the people themselves deliberately planned and executed their own ruin !

The fact of the matter appears to be, that in the system of banks and speculative enterprises in the United States, the principle of Democracy—that is, every person, or a great number of persons, having an interest in the establishment—does not exist: and, as the aristocratic principle flourishes in as much vigour in America, though not possessed of political power, as it does under a monarchical government, it is the exclusive or irresponsible system which has caused the financial ruin of the United States, and discredited them throughout the money-markets of Europe. What establishment in that country set the example of insolvency, and commenced the ruin? We believe it was the United States Bank, considered the national concern. Now, there was no democratic influence allowed to operate there, but the whole concern was managed on the most exclusive or aristocratic principle, and the financial Cataline of the establishment conducted the conspiracy against the public.

It will be the duty of the future historian to investigate the dark transactions of the financial revolutions of the United States, and the result will be that the democratic principle was sacrificed by the cunning and selfishness of aristocracies of banks, of joint-stock speculations, and of the legislatures of some particular states.

A blessing to mankind will be derived from the down-break of the national credit of the United States. Communities and nations will be compelled to husband their resources, and raise within the year the funds necessary for their government, and it will not henceforth be tolerated, that the living generation shall mortgage the resources of future generations for objects of a temporary or ambitious nature.

In support of the position taken, that the discreditable financial transactions in the United States, did not proceed from the democratic principle, and indeed had nothing to do with it, the following evidence is adduced. The first is from a little work entitled "The Present Age," by the late Doctor Channing, than whom a more enlightened and independent witness could not be produced. In alluding to the financial and commercial embarrassments of his country, he says—"Let not the poor bear the burden of the rich. At this moment, we are groaning over the depressed and dishonoured state of our country? and who, let me ask, have shaken its credit, and made so many of its institutions bankrupt? The poor—or the rich: Whence is it, that the incomes of the widow, the orphan, the aged, have been narrowed, and multitudes on both sides of the ocean brought to the brink of want? Is it from an outbreak of popular fury? Is it from gangs of thieves sprung from the mob?—We know the truth; and it shows us where the great danger to property lies. Communities fall by the vices of the great, not the small." *

The next is from a letter by the "Genevese Traveller," published in the London "*Times*," of 1st November, 1842.

"In no form or shape has the Federal government, or any of its functionaries, at any time given countenance to

* "The Present Age, by W E Channing 1841."

the fraudulent and demoralizing doctrine of repudiation—and by repudiation I mean a declaration, that a State is not most solemnly bound to pay all debts contracted by the State or its agents.”

“Whatever indiscreet, and perhaps in some instances unprincipled, individuals may have proposed or contemplated, it is a fact, that no legislature of any one of the twenty-six States has passed any law, or done any act, indicating a disposition to sustain and carry out the doctrine of repudiation; nor has any governor, or other high official character (with one exception) suggested such a measure as expedient or proper. It is true, in some instances, the equity of the claims against particular States has been denied, and this has been the pretext for refusing payment. So far, and no farther, have the several States gone.” . .

“The American people, as a people, consider anything like repudiation profligate and dishonest; and never, until they shall have been tenfold more vicious than they now are, and their whole character shall have changed, will they become the advocates of such an unprincipled measure.”*

* *Times*, 1st Nov 1842.

CHAP. VIII.

ARISTOCRACY AND COLONIZATION.

THE ARISTOCRATIC PRINCIPLE DISPLAYED IN SCHEMES OF COLONIZATION FROM EUROPE SINCE THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.—THE RESULT HAS BEEN EITHER BARBARISM OR REVOLUTION, IN THE COLONIES PLANTED *

As contrasts to the beneficent plans of the legislators of the ancient Jews and Romans in their Agrarian laws, a few cases in which the British people have a deep interest, will be adduced.

At the end of seven hundred and seventy years, the power of this country, the laws of it, the condition of its inhabitants as respects their subsistence, their moral and religious education, their civil and political liberties—all are yet affected by the measures of William of Normandy. The people of this country, with all their intelligence, their industry, and indefatigable perseverance, have not worked themselves out of the baneful influence arising from the division of the lands by that conqueror. Most of the lands of England were portioned in the most reckless manner to

*British America is an instance of civilized and successful revolution.—Spanish America has succeeded in throwing off the yoke of Spain, but for want of wise regulations for the division and assignment of the waste lands, the inhabitants are retrograding to semibarbarism.

The case of Saint Domingo presents a terrible example of the vengeance taken by the population, in the general slaughter of the governing party of another race.

The Brazils, with a territory of great fertility, and almost boundless resources, lie under the Upas tree of aristocratic and sacerdotal growth.

his favourite followers. One military follower received for his share of the spoliation, between seven and eight hundred manors. The county of Norfolk, containing about a million and three hundred thousand acres, was divided among sixty-six proprietors: one man received a grant of the whole palatinate of Chester, and in this proportion the soil of England was wrenched from the natives, and bestowed on a few barbarous warriors.

This is a matter of history long since past, and people may exclaim, what use can it be to bring it forward to the present generation! But it is of great use to refer to such passages of our history, in order to remind every individual at present living, that a similar principle pervades British law, and that in the British plans of colonization, put in execution within the present century, grants of waste lands have been as lavishly bestowed on the followers of a minister of the crown, as those which William granted to his subordinates.

The discovery of America interested the whole human race; and where is the man in Europe, at this day, who has not some direct or remote interest in that country?

The Pope, the Head of the Christian Church in the fifteenth century—in the plenitude of his power, and from the vast stores of his geographical knowledge—made a grant to the King of Spain of all the countries discovered by Columbus. His power was acknowledged and obeyed by the nations of Europe at that period; but as Galileo had not yet been born, to enlighten mankind, and to bewilder the Pope with a knowledge of this earth and its relation to the sun, it so happened that His Holiness was anything but precise touching degrees of latitude; and as respected the meridian of the countries granted, it was found afterwards, that the Bull of assignment was nearly

bringing the Spaniards into war with the Portuguese, for the right to countries situated on the coasts of Hindostan. So much for the Pope's interference, in granting the possession of newly-discovered countries !

In a work like this, the example of the Pope will be followed, in alluding to various important matters which come under notice, in a very sketchy sort of way, somewhat similar to His Holiness's sweeping outlines, described in his Bull of assignment of America to Spain.

If any country in the world is capable of affording lessons to Great Britain, it is Spain. Commanding the finest geographical position in Europe, and containing within herself the most abundant natural resources, she is, in the present day, in a state of decrepitude and decay. Her history presents greater vicissitudes than those of any other nation in Europe.

In very remote ages, Spain was to the Carthaginian, and the other great commercial states on the shores of the Mediterranean, what America afterwards became to herself. Before the Christian era, she was one of the most wealthy countries of Western Europe ; and making every allowance for the exaggerations of tradition, there are grounds for believing, that the population then was as great as in the present century. She was a most valuable appendage of the Roman empire ; and the ruins of cities and public works testify to the former grandeur of the Roman dominion. Her whole history is exciting and instructive, but it presents the fearful details of contentions of different races of men, and the debasing effects on the population, of opposing creeds. Spain has been the battle-ground, not only of nations, but of entire sections of the globe ; Europe, Asia, and Africa have struggled for the possession ; and, as if to consummate her ruin, America was discovered, to strike

the fatal blow. And what is melancholy to reflect is, that though the populations are mixed, they are on the whole composed of good materials, and can excel in the arts of peace, as much as they have always shown themselves brave and skilful in war. In all ages, the greatest warriors have displayed their genius in its plains, or upon its mountains. Hannibal, Scipio, Pompey, Julius Cæsar, Napoleon, and Wellington, have all acquired that species of renown which gains so much notice in history.

One of the causes of the long-continued disturbed state of Spain may be assigned—the mixed nature of the population, and their want of a mutual interest. There is little to be perceived of a national or public spirit pervading all classes. The inhabitants of the four northern provinces differ as much, in their temperament and habits, from those of the southern and eastern shores, as the northern Germans differ from the Italians; but yet, contrariety of character among the inhabitants of a country is not an obstacle to a perfect national union; as we see in the northern and southern states of the united provinces of North America, where mutual interest, and love of the form of government, bind people of very opposite tempers very strongly together.

So it might happen with the various classes of people who live in Spain; but for want of a proper representation, they have not been able to agree on the points of compromise.

But it is in vain to expect any favourable change in that country, until an Agrarian law be enforced. A lay and theocratic Aristocracy, of the most withering character, has for centuries kept half the lands in the state of deserts. It used to be estimated, that a third of the lands in Spain belonged to the church.

The pestilence which, about the middle of the fourteenth century, swept half of the human race from the earth, was severely felt in Spain, where it is said about two-thirds of the inhabitants perished. Those who survived took possession of the lands of them who fell, and for want of labourers the lands were converted into pasturage; hence the state of things that led to the establishment of the *Mesta*—that singular system of pasturage-laws peculiar to Spain. Throughout a great part of that fine country, agriculture is actually prohibited in the districts inhabited by the sheep! Enclosures are not allowed to be made, and hence the vast plains destitute of timber.

Man, by his laws, acts as a curse on the soil; and will any one, after reflecting on the condition of Spain, say to the present generation, that there is no place for them at Nature's feast?

Spain carried to the vast regions of America, which she called her colonies, the principles which blasted her own soil; and all that now remains to her, is the tradition, that the sun at one period never set on her dominions!*

* It is extraordinary to relate, that in Mexico, the most valuable of all the former colonies of Spain, it has never occurred to any party to pass an Agrarian law, for the breaking up of those fertile wildernesses, called estates, belonging to private individuals. The *mayorazgos*, or entails, are still, I believe, allowed to exist; and those immense tracts of country, originally granted by the King of Spain, in virtue of the Pope's Bull, to Cortes, are administered for the benefit of the descendants, or the present representatives, of that bold and successful adventurer. The grand error committed by Mexico, and all the other countries of Spanish America, was the adoption of theoretical constitutions of government, in place of systems suited to the genius, customs, and habits of the people. The Mexican Congress imagined that it was legislating wisely and patriotically, when it decreed the abolition of titles, and the destruction of heraldic devices. What use was it to change names, and leave substances untouched? To pass a law to call a man "Citizen" instead of "Marquis," and let him retain a power to keep

France was the next, that sent out to plant colonies in America. Canada was taken possession of, and, in the true spirit of the age, large tracts of land were granted on the Gothic military tenure; and the consequence has been, that the French population at this day in Canada present the singular spectacle of the laws and customs of Europe, of the sixteenth century, existing on the banks of the St. Lawrence; and, in many respects, the country is thus much behind the United States, on the right bank of that river.

Queen Elizabeth had no influence with the Pope; and even had she had faith in a papal colonizing Bull, she was too proud to ask for one. She therefore, on her own grant to one of her courtiers, disposed of a tract of country along the shores of North America, extending to more than a thousand miles in length. The royal prerogative was at that time in its greatest vigour, and continued still in strength, during the reigns of James I. and the two Charles's: hence all the settlements formed in America by the English, were chartered to men of rank, or to certain favoured individuals, with a view to enrich them.

As the population of England did not exceed at that period four millions of souls, we, who live in the present day, cannot assert that there existed a necessity for colonies, from superabundant numbers of people.

The evil principle of the British monopolizing system of colonization, lies in the placing of a third party between the state as the proprietor of the public lands, and the men by whose industry the lands are to be made productive. Throughout the whole system, from the first grant

a whole province unpopulated and uncultivated, was childish. It was similar to stripping the lace off the dresses of surrendered troops, instead of taking the arms out of their hands.

issued by Queen Elizabeth, down to the last charter given to a New Zealand Company, the same fatal error is preserved. The grantees of the lands bestowed by Queen Elizabeth and her successors, soon found out, that, without labourers, their possessions were unproductive wastes.

A third party, as proprietor between the state and the cultivators, acts either with profuse liberality, pernicious to those who receive it—or, if gain is to be made, he squeezes out of the laborious cultivator, as much of the produce of the land as possible. A man who received a whole province as an estate, was at times very bountiful in his grants to other persons, with a view to encourage them to do something to improve the lands. Hence a struggle was carried on, by a few persons greedy of gain, to subdue nature in the wilderness of a boundless extent.

Many plans were devised to procure labourers; the accidental arrival of a vessel with negro slaves into a port of Virginia, was the first introduction of the curse of slavery; then convicted felons were transported, and assigned as labourers; and afterwards, persons were engaged in England, and indentured to the colonists, which gave rise to a system of kidnapping of the most unfeeling character.

The colonists wanted wives; and those of Virginia, as they became rich, offered so many hundred pounds of tobacco, as the freight of well-behaved young women from England, to become the mothers of nations.

Place the Anglo-Saxon race in any part of the globe, where there is ground to stand on, water to float in, and air to breathe, and to a certainty something will be accomplished. In spite of every drawback, from the barbarous mode of assignment of the public lands, the colonists increased in numbers, and acquired fresh energies by their advance to

wealth. Tyrannical measures of the home-government, and religious persecution, drove thousands of brave and conscientious men to seek for their families a new country; and they found it in the forests on the banks of the Delaware, and the shores of the bay of Boston.

Kings and governments of England have been generally too much engrossed with the monopolies or the party objects of the day, to be able to extend their mental vision far into colonial matters; and it was a fatal want of foresight in Charles I., when he interfered with the liberty of Cromwell, Hampden, Pym, and others, by restraining them from embarking for a colony in North America. It is curious to speculate on what might have been the consequences, had Cromwell proceeded to settle in the colonies. He, and his enthusiastic followers in the civil wars, fought with the sword in one hand and the Bible in the other, and sustained themselves in battle by the examples of the Israelites against their enemies. In a colony, he would have been a legislator, and a leader; and perhaps, in the division of lands, he might have adopted the regulations of Moses, and anticipated by two centuries the advance of his adopted country.

But failing the presence of that extraordinary man, the British colonies proceeded to extend their footsteps into the wilderness. Men became famous "according as they lifted up axes upon the thick trees;"* and at length, towards the end of the eighteenth century, the colonies—like a young giant nurtured in the forest, and strengthened by labour—sprang from the earth, and achieved their independence of a powerful empire.

Britain acquired the Canadas by conquest; and grafting on the original seignorial tenures of French law, the system

* Psalms lxxiv. 5.

of free grants of land, she has produced, in these colonies, a state of matters, which bids defiance to every principle of common sense. The wit of man appears to have been taxed, to devise extraordinary modes of individuals getting their names inscribed on official charts; and the spots thus distinguished, registered as estates belonging to such individuals. An epic poem might be composed, on the beauty and advantages of the plan of assigning lands to "leaders and their associates," and the romantic names of the daughters of a councillor of government be sung in chorus, as the possessors of their 1200 acres of land each. The spirit of Caleb ought to animate the large Canadian land-owners,—but as there are no castles to be assaulted there, let the reward be for the heaviest load of timber!

But what will create amazement in those not accustomed to give attention to such matters, is to find, that at the Cape of Good Hope the public lands were granted on a principle of circles, whereof the radius was three miles!

After the loss of the North American Colonies, it was deemed expedient by the British government of the day, to look out for another continent; and, fortunately for it, Captain Cook, like a second Columbus, arrived at the time, and announced the discovery of a Southern world. Our jails were filled with redundant inmates, whom we could no longer despatch to America, and it was therefore determined to transport them to Botany Bay.

Wonderful incidents crowd on a man who writes on the affairs of this country; and here it becomes a matter of course to allude to the discovery of an Australian continent, and to record the establishment of a British colony on it.

But the business here is with the division and assignment of the lands inhabited by a few scanty tribes of savages and kangaroos.

The scheme of division was very anomalous. At first there was an approach to a rational principle of allotment, by assigning to each convict, as he became free, a certain quantity of land; but as an opinion of the value of the lands began to prevail, the plan was changed, and schemes of aggrandizement were formed in and out of the colony. The system of free grants in profuse quantities was in vigour, till within a few years ago, when a change was made, to check the ministers of government from wasting the public lands on their followers.

However, a strong monied power is now allowed to step in, and stand between the state and the farmer and shepherd, who really make the lands of any use at all. In the Australian colonies there are many monstrosities in the assignment of public lands; and the experience of three hundred years appears to have been completely thrown away.

There is no space here for going into details, but in honour of the man who at present occupies the post of prime minister of the British government, a few cases will be noticed, especially as they occurred during a former administration, in which he had a share.

Although not in strict chronological order, yet the name of Peel must have precedence in the list of grantees of land in Australia.

In the year 1829, a special grant of 500,000 acres in Western Australia, was made to Mr. Thomas Peel, a relation of the individual who at present holds the reins of government of this country. . Acres . 500,000

In the year 1824, a special grant of 1,000,000 acres on the eastern coast of that country, was made to a certain number of individuals residing in London and elsewhere, and styling themselves the "Agricultural Company of Australia" . 1,000,000

Brought forward . . . Acres	1,500,000
In the same year, another grant of 500,000 acres was made in Van Diemen's Land, to individuals in and out of London, styling themselves the "Van Diemen's Land Company"	500,000
	<hr/>

Acres . . . 2,000,000

The conditions, on which the grant to Peel was given, were, the investment of funds to the extent of one shilling and sixpence an acre, including the cost of passage of 300 labourers from England, to the promised land at the Swan River. The conditions of the grants to the companies were, the payment of a quit-rent of one and a half per cent on the land valued at one shilling and sixpence an acre, equal to about one farthing an acre of annual rent: or, the redemption of the quit-rent might be made, by the employment and maintenance of a certain number of convicts, beginning with the number of 600, and not exceed 1400 men.

With the exception of the convicts, these cases will illustrate the whole system of British colonization from the time of Elizabeth down to the present:—favouritism, quackery, jobbing, and partiality to a few, have been the rule, to the total neglect of the great mass of the people. It is not necessary to ascertain whether Mr. Thomas Peel fulfilled the conditions of his grant or not: the thing turned out a complete failure, but the grand result has been that the regulations for the disposal of land on the western coasts of Australia, require of the farmers and settlers, who go from this country to that part of the world, the price of 20s an acre, for land that was originally granted to Peel at 1s. 6d!—Can the people of this great nation repose con-

fidence in the judgment and integrity of a minister, who in colonial arrangements, affecting the property and even the lives of thousands of families, has such a strong personal or family interest in favour of a speculative colony!

With respect to the grant of one million of acres to "the Australian Agricultural Company;" at the end of the sixteenth year, it appears that there were not one thousand acres in cultivation—that the population of a tract of country equal in area to the county of Kent, in England, consisted of seventy-nine free individuals, and 547 convicts without wives—that the whole colony of New South Wales was subject to a monopoly of the supply of coals by that Company, and a price charged accordingly for that indispensable necessary of life. All these results have taken place from plans which were formed or approved of by the Right Hon. Sir Robert Peel, while a member of the government from 1824 to 1829.*

The national feelings of the people of this country are in favour of colonization, because the people are persuaded into the belief, that colonies promote our manufactures, commerce, and, above all, our shipping. But to a great extent, there is a mistake on all these points.

* The annual report published on the 31st January, 1843, confirms the statement in the text. The Australian Agricultural Company, established under the auspices of Sir Robert Peel, while in the government, is a miserable failure, and a disgrace to the country, and to the very age. From December, 1838, to December, 1841, the population has increased from 626 to 713 souls, of whom 389 are convicts. The sheep have diminished from 85,647, in 1838, to 78,569, in 1841—and in 1841 the value of the "*growing crops*" of a Company, with a grant of one million of acres is put down in the accounts at £245!

The only item that appears to have increased is 1,401 tons of coals more in 1841, than in the previous year; and be it observed, that the Company possesses a monopoly of the supply of coal to the colony of New South Wales!

Our manufacturers, our merchants, our shipowners, and our industrious farmers, are certainly very little benefited by 620 individuals employed in tending cattle and sheep spread over a million of acres. These lands are picked and chosen for the advantage of situation, for their fertility, and, above all, for the command of water, and consequently they ought to be able to maintain a considerable population.

The country must be poor indeed, if it could not support 20,000 families, of five persons each, thus affording a farm of fifty acres to each family: plenty of markets for the produce would be found in the towns and villages near.

Now, the supply of these 100,000 inhabitants would be an object to manufacturers, and the conveyance of the supplies would require a good many vessels.

There is another interest to be taken into account, namely, the banking interest, which in the Australian colonies appears of value and importance. All persons acquainted with the principles of business must agree, that in banking, an amount divided into a great many small sums, affords for business more security and profit than the same amount made up of a few large sums. In trade, in banking, and also in politics, it will be found that the larger the number of persons interested in them, the greater is the security for all. Would that this great truth could be impressed on governments, in the management of Colonies!—but provinces are granted to individuals who allow the lands to remain deserts, and millions are doomed to perish, or wander over the earth in search of a resting place.

In confirmation of an extravagant and unscientific assignment of the public lands in British Colonies, it is only necessary to state, that in the Canadas, at the Cape of Good Hope, and in the Australian Colonies, without taking

in New Zealand, there are upwards of seventy-eight millions of acres, granted almost without valuable consideration. It is to be particularly noticed, that that vast territory assigned to a comparatively small number of individuals, is all picked land, of good quality, and in the most favourable situations as respects water and other advantages. The area of Great Britain and Ireland, with the adjacent islands, including mountains, lakes and rivers, and sterile land, is only about seventy-seven millions and a half of acres. The proportion of population to gross numbers of acres in the year 1841, was as follows:—

Average of England, about $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres for each soul.

„ Wales, about $5\frac{1}{2}$ „

„ Scotland, about $7\frac{1}{2}$ „

„ Ireland about $2\frac{3}{8}$ „

The argument incessantly urged by the favourers of colonization is, that the waste lands are for homes for our overplus population; but this over-abundant population is not treated fairly, as it finds a third party standing between it and the state, as the owner and lord of the public lands. With such resources as Great Britain possesses, it is a melancholy thing to say, that our emigrant farmers, and hardy labourers, will find a system established in the United States of North America, under which they will experience more attention to their necessities.*

* Now, that the question respecting the frontier line between the British settlements of New Brunswick, and the North-eastern States of the North American Republic, has been settled by treaty, it may be stated, that the delay and the uncertainty for fifty years have preserved about ten millions of good land from having been granted in the usual grasping manner of English ministers. In this view, it is a happy thing that the lands have been retained for the use of hard working agriculturists, whether American or British, rather than fall into the idle hands of court favourites, or of the unenterprising poor cousins of secretaries of state. Do not suppose that

As the author of these pages has bestowed a good deal of attention on our systems of colonization, he cannot resist offering a few remarks whenever the subject presents itself. As the matter comes in the way, the people of this country may be reminded that they have just been charged with a debt of three hundred thousand pounds, incurred in the foundation and gross mismanagement of a colony planted in Australia so late as the year 1835.*

this idea is an idle imagination. The whole of the lands in Prince Edward's Island, in the neighbourhood of New Brunswick were granted away in one day to seventy-five grantees. The quantity of public land thus spoliated was 1,457,209 acres.

"The whole of the land was granted in one day to absentee proprietors upon terms which have never been fulfilled."—*Lord Durham's Report on the Canadas*, p. 14.

The whole sum received for the lands was £731.

* Refer for particulars to the proceedings in the House of Commons, in the month of July 1842.—"The Mother-country was charged with a debt of £300,000, and with 20,000 a year for the maintenance of paupers in the colony of South Australia, founded on what are called the '*Wakefield principles*!'"—Among the millions voted to be charged on the impoverished people of this country, by forty-five or fifty men, who go through the farce of legislation between *sleeping and waking*, there are few items which contain more secret history than the above-mentioned sum of £300,000!

CHAP. IX.

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

THE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLE OF THE ASSIGNMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS IS FORMING A NATIONAL CHARACTER WHICH COMBINES THE SUBTLETY OF THE JEWISH AND THE ENERGY OF THE ROMAN.

THERE is one nation in the world, that, under our own observation, is advancing by gigantic strides to population, wealth, and power. This nation is the United States of North America; and if the cause of this extraordinary progress be sought for, it will be found in the mode of the assignment of the public lands to the people. Without having copied the laws of the ancient Jewish or Roman legislators, the Americans adopted the principles of them so far in their land-regulations, as to offer to every man, on equitable conditions, as much land as the circumstances of his family demand.

By the law of Moses, the lands were divided among all the citizens, with the exception of the priesthood, in proportion to their families, and by this plan the means of subsistence were provided, and the principle of equality was recognized, for all. Perhaps it was even compulsory on the Israelites, to occupy and cultivate the farms assigned to them.

By the laws of the United States, there is no division of the lands made among the citizens, but the principle on

which they are based, is the possession to every individual disposed to occupy and cultivate the land, to the extent of his ability, on reasonable terms of price and tenure. There is no compulsion and no restraint, but the famous pre-emption law encourages the settlement of deserving cultivators on small quantities of land, to form homes for their families, and it discourages the acquisition of large tracts of land by single persons. The pioneers of the wilderness are guaranteed, at a moderate price, the fee simple of the lands which they may reclaim from the wildness of nature.

This unfolds the sources of North American power and greatness; and, since the destruction of the British aristocratic domination, the advance made has been altogether marvellous, not only from the natural increase of the population, but from the additions by foreigners, attracted by the wisdom and impartiality of the laws of the assignment of the public lands.

"We hold out to the people of other countries, an invitation to come and settle among us, as members of our rapidly-growing family; and, for the blessings which we offer them, we require them to look upon our country as their country, and to unite with us in the task of preserving our institutions, and thereby perpetuating our liberties."*

The population of the United States, at the Treaty of Independence, was about three millions of souls, being about the number of the Jews on entering into the Holy Land; and now, at the end of sixty years, a country, from having been a colony, oppressed and insulted by a dominant party in Great Britain, has, without hyperbole, become an empire, destined to exercise a powerful influence in the affairs of the world.

Let the United States husband their public lands, for

* President's Message, June 1, 1841.

the use, and for homes, of generations yet unborn ; and let facilities of settlement be continued at a natural price—in contempt of the theories of European colonizers ; and, on the truth of all history, their prosperity, power, and influence will extend through countless ages.

In the year 1840, their population was 17,068,000, and the quantity of grain of all kinds raised, was 615,515,000 bushels—confirming the truth of the observation made three thousand years before, “ *That there is much Food in the tillage of the Poor!* ” *

* Proverbs.

CHAP. X.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN SEVERE TAXATION AND THE DECLINE OR REVOLUTION OF NATIONS.

PART I

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM GENERAL HISTORY.—THE CRUSADES —THE DARK AGES
—A FEW HISTORICAL EVENTS CITED AT RANDOM.

To the political philosopher, the moralist, and the romancer, the characters and events described in the pages of history, afford subjects for their respective studies and pursuits. But, for the great mass of mankind, those pages bear the record of deeds of violence, and acts of oppression, practised on the inhabitants of the nations of the earth.

Men in society, in every age, have presented the appearance of the ocean—ever in a state of oscillation—alternating between the hurricane, the breeze, and the calm.

After the transactions of all history have been divested of the pomp and circumstance attendant on war and diplomacy, and of the tinsel of courts and their intrigues, and when laid bare to the observation of men, they will be found to present cupidity on the part of rulers, and efforts of the governed to save themselves from being made victims to the covetous principle.

An attempt has been made in other branches of this work to show that political, and, to a certain extent,

spiritual dominion, rest on the control of the subsistence of the people subject to the power; and various examples, deduced from history, were cited to establish the position.

In this section the reverse of the picture will be shown; from which it will be discerned, that the overstretch of the power thus acquired, bursts for a time the bonds of society, which is thereby changed in its form, and balance of interests.

The action on society is the cupidity of sovereigns, princes, aristocracies, and dominations of all kinds; and the counteraction, is the resistance made by the subjects exposed to the severity of the exactions. The first is Power in all its degrees, up to the maximum of fiscal despotism; the second is Revolution, in all its forms of overwhelming violence, or of regulated popular force. This is describing the two great antagonist principles in the public affairs of mankind, in terms which admit of no compromise, and which will, no doubt, shock many persons by their very harshness. But there is no help for this. What history has written, down to the present age, cannot be altered—it will stand for ever: and the more deeply that its affairs be analyzed, the more striking will the truth of the description appear. The ambition of monarchs and of warriors—the loves, the jealousies, and revenges of the inmates of palaces—the schemes and tricks of statesmen—are only episodes in the great drama.* Society has been ever moved and agitated by those two antagonist powers, which are employed by an overruling Providence, as instru-

* History, as it has been written heretofore, is like those accounts of travellers, which are filled with the personal narratives of adventures, instead of descriptions of the soil, state of agriculture, manufactures, trade, religion, laws, and customs of the inhabitants of the country through which the traveller passes.

ments in his direction of human affairs, to some ultimate design of wisdom and beneficence. Oppression forces on the calm of misery—Revolution upheaves the elements of society, and moulds them into new forms. Such has been the case throughout the world—like the flux and reflux of the tides of the ocean, or of the currents which move its waters, and prevent their stagnation and corruption.

Taxation, unjust in its principles and severe in its pressure, has led to the greatest revolutions which ever agitated the world, and which in their consequences are felt in some way or other, by every individual at present living in Europe and America. It is perfectly marvellous to think on, how small a thing should produce such tremendous effects. Small pieces of coin, like sparks struck from the adamant of taxation, falling on the inflammable materials in human society, have physically and morally set the world in flames;—morally, by the excitement and ardour of men's minds—and physically, by the fire of battles, and the blaze of burning fleets, towns, and villages. Nor need this create wonder, for we perceive precisely similar effects produced in the operations of nature. The ignition, or sudden expansion, of gases beneath the surface of the earth, will cause an earthquake which may overturn mountains and overwhelm cities;—the electric fluid, the most subtle of substances, will rend whatever is opposed to it;—the massy trunks of the forest-trees which cover a whole continent, have sprung from small seeds dropped into the ground.

Political oppression, tyranny, despotism, and such like expressions, mean nothing more or less than the privations, discomforts, and dangers, to which men are exposed, by having their substance, or materials of living, curtailed, or, in the extreme case, reduced to less than will support life. When one nation subjects another nation, the first will

perhaps be satisfied with the payment of a tribute or periodical subsidy from the latter.* The conquered people were allowed in many cases, to manage their own affairs, on the condition of delivering annually a sum of money, or, among pastoral tribes, a certain number of cattle and sheep. In modern times, among civilized people, there is nothing so sacredly guarded as the sovereignty of the nation. This is shown in the sensitiveness of any affront to the national ensign, and wo befall that people that allows this symbol of power to be upheld by hands too feeble or treacherous to save its honour from the audacity of an aggressor.

When the oppression of the governing power becomes too heavy on a people, and reduces their means of subsistence, the nature of the race, and their inherent qualities, decide the issue. Some nations do not possess the energy to resist the pressure, but sink under the burden, and in a few generations show only a remnant of miserable beings crawling on the surface.

A great part of Asia presents melancholy proofs of the decay of nations, that were in former ages populous and powerful. In many parts of America, particularly in Guatimala, there are the ruins of large cities buried in the forests, with other imperishable monuments of nations—the very people of which have become extinct. But the nations of northern Europe are composed of more stubborn materials, and, like the palm-tree, rise from the earth, and spread their branches above the weights which are suspended from them. The inhabitants of the Dutch Nether-

* "Jotham fought with the king of the Ammonites, and prevailed against them. And the children of Ammon gave him the same year an hundred talents of silver, and ten thousand measures of wheat, and ten thousand of bailey. So much did the children of Ammon pay unto him, both the second year and the third year"—2 Chronicles, xxvii.

lands, in throwing off the yoke of Spain in the sixteenth century, exhibited to the world an example of extraordinary power in the union and calm resolution of small communities against the mightiest nation of Europe. A people united, and determined to free themselves, are certain of gaining their objects. A people of this energetic cast of frame will endure the extremity of distress, before they rouse themselves to sweep off the authors of their misery; but sooner or later they will move, and rise with a shout that will be heard round the globe. The French nation is a living example, in illustration of what is here stated. The constitutional temperament of a people has much to do in these matters.

Coolness of temper and mental reflection will lead some people to contend for a principle, and calmly proceed to arm themselves for its support and practical application. John Hampden, as representing the English people, deliberately brought the question of illegal taxation to an issue, on his refusal to pay the amount of twenty shillings, demanded of him by a king, who wished to rule with a vigour beyond the law. He calmly appealed to his country, and roused it to resist the unjust claim: the country responded to his call, and a great revolution was the consequence.

The people of the British American colonies, stung by the injustice offered them by a dominant party in the mother-country, pledged their property, and perilled their lives, in a struggle with a powerful nation, on a question of a demand of three-pence of duty on a pound of tea. They fought, and achieved their independence; and this marks an era in the history of mankind. It is not without its use to state these changes in terms, to show at a glance the origin, progress, and end of great revolutions.

On the authority of history, unjust taxation irritates a people into violent measures; and cruel exactions justify revolutions.—They are cause and effect, and the relation is preserved by the Governor of all created beings.

When one considers by centuries, the great events in the history of the world, and connects them together in groups, it is remarkable how closely they appear related; and in taking this view of them, and beginning with the outbreak under John Hampden, it will not perhaps be mere fancy to trace the connecting links from that event, to the consolidation of oligarchical power under George the Third, to the American war undertaken to crush the liberties of a great portion of British citizens, and to the revolution and independence of the North American States. Again, from that revolution was carried the torch that lit up in France the funeral pile of a defunct system of corruption—then followed the crash of thrones in all the kingdoms of Europe, save two—and kings became wanderers amidst the crowds of cities, or captives at the chariot-wheels of Napoleon. All Europe was convulsed, and all the nations of the earth looked on and trembled. Spain was torn up, and again cast down; and those vast regions of America, which she presumptuously claimed as her own, shook off the chains that bound them, and sprang into an independent existence.

The world was moved to its centre, and presents in the present day a new aspect, from the mighty revolution which issued from one great movement of the British race of people. Well may a man be proud of the British or Irish name, when he reflects on the powerful influence which it has pleased Almighty God to give to the people that bear it, over the destiny of the world! Let foreign nations, who begin to raise the heel, and turn round in an attitude as if

to trample on this country, first count the cost to themselves of their daring designs ; and, on the other hand, let the aristocratic party of this nation weigh its own fate in the balance, should perseverance in oppressive and unjust measures force the people to rouse themselves, and in the triumph of their own victory, to raise the shout of freedom from tyranny in all the nations of the earth. And let the sovereign of this great empire remember, and let her tell it to her children, and let her children tell it to another generation, that she occupies the throne of these realms, and bears the sceptre, by virtue of a title derived from a revolution which issued out of an attempt of a former monarch to lay an unconstitutional tax on the people.

As these historical sketches are not arranged chronologically, but are selected merely to illustrate the connection between partial and cruel taxation, and the revolutions to which it leads, the following instances are adduced ; and in bringing the Crusades to bear on the subject, it will be admitted that no more important event can be selected since the Christian era.

In the year 1096, the first of those extraordinary expeditions marched from Europe for Palestine, and the ninth and last of them departed in 1271 ; and in 1291, the final ruin of the European cause in the Holy Land, was effected by the recapture, by the Saracens, of the important fortress of Acre. Thus, for the space of about two hundred years, every country and state of Europe, from Sweden and Denmark, Scotland and Ireland, to Spain and Italy, poured forth their population, to fall by the sword of the infidels, or perish of hunger and thirst, or by pestilence, on the soil of Syria. It is calculated that about 2,000,000 of persons perished in these wild enterprises.

Before tracing the causes of, and motives for, the Crusades

some of the consequences which ensued from them will first be noticed.

Perhaps the advantages which have been attributed to the intercourse with the East have been overrated, in considering the condition of Europe during the progress and after the cessation of the religious wars. The importation into the countries of Europe of the plunder of the East, certainly did not replace the wealth that was carried out of them for the prosecution of those wars; and the use of luxuries, not before known, and an improvement in manners, did not compensate for an increased ferocity of disposition acquired in such fanatical struggles. However, the common opinion is, that the civilization of Europe was advanced by the warlike intercourse for two centuries with the East. And it is supposed, that literature and refinement of taste were introduced from that part of the world. The various orders of military knights, half priests half soldiers, had their origin in the expeditions of the Crusades. The immense wealth of those orders excited the cupidity of the kings of France and other countries; and the vicious lives and supposed dangerous designs of the members of those secret societies, formed a plea for their suppression, and for the confiscation of their property.

One circumstance which always produces a deep impression on society, occurred during the progress of the Crusades; and that was, a pretty general transfer of property, in order to raise funds for the fitting out of the expeditions. Lands, houses, and moveable property, frequently changed hands, and the wealth of the church was augmented during the process. Indeed, the Crusades were so profitable to the coffers of the holy church, that several popes stimulated, by every means, kings, princes, and people, to carry them on. The English were beset by the emissaries from Rome,

but were persuaded in vain "to commute their piety into gold." In fine, the condition of the common people was not improved, nor was the tyranny of the aristocracy broken, by the holy wars. However, there can be no doubt of the public mind, throughout Europe, having been heated and strongly excited by the extraordinary military, and partly commercial, enterprises of the Crusades. And this mental activity, nurtured by the knowledge derived from expeditions undertaken by men into the interior of Asia, gradually increased by what it fed on, and ended in those glorious discoveries, of America by Columbus, and of the doubling of the Cape of Good Hope by Vasco de Gama. And these two important discoveries taking place about the same time, changed the destiny of the world.

The demand for shipping, for the conveyance of men and horses to the Holy Land during the Crusades, called into existence the fleets of Genoa, Marseilles, and Venice, and the commerce of those towns was extended to all parts of the shores of the Mediterranean sea. The principles of the maritime law, at present in force in Europe, were established in the thirteenth century, by the commercial cities of the Mediterranean. The important principle that the flag covers the merchandise, and that, during war, private property on board of vessels should be protected, was established by the municipality of Marseilles. The very forms of the charter-parties, now in use in the sea-ports of Great Britain, were taken from the contracts entered into with Genoa, to convey troops, pilgrims, and goods to the ports of Syria.

To a manufacturing and commercial people like the British, the revolutions of the Crusades have been of the greatest importance, as they have, more than any other nation, profited by the new channels of navigation and

trade to the East and West, opened since the fifteenth century.

When all these circumstances are considered—when the extension of geographical knowledge is taken into account—when the mind dwells on the consequences which have resulted from the discovery of America, and the transplanting, to that quarter of the world, of the *sugar-cane* and the *coffee plant*, first brought to the knowledge of Europe by the Crusaders—and, above all, when one reflects on the reformation of religion, and the other changes in Germany, France, and England, which followed that event, the mind is impressed by the stupendous importance of the revolution of the Crusades, to which all the extraordinary events referred to can be directly or indirectly traced. So important have those enterprises been in their results, that almost every writer on the history, politics, morals, jurisprudence, and manners of Europe, since the thirteenth century, has delighted to expatiate on them. But it has been remarked, that, contrary to what happens in most military enterprises of great pith, they did not form at the time the subjects of romance or poetry. Probably there was too much of the *reality* of horrors and misery of every kind, to allow any scope to the imagination.

Having briefly noticed the events which issued out of the Crusades, it will now be necessary to go back to the cause which led to them, and it is very instructive to find that *taxation* was the spark that ignited the inflammable materials of the whole of Europe. A poll-tax of one bezant, a gold coin of uncertain value,* imposed on pilgrims entering the holy city of Jerusalem, roused the pity and indignation of all Christendom, for great numbers of pious persons reduced

* The value of it is supposed to have been about equal to twenty shillings sterling.

to the extremity of misery, and even torture, by the infidels, in consequence of their inability to satisfy the demand made on them. And, when the cruelties inflicted on the pilgrims by the Mahomedan barbarians had reached their height; an extraordinary man, of ardent temperament, of pious zeal, and possessed of that species of eloquence suited to the age, and to the minds that he addressed, preached the deliverance of the Christians, and the liberation of the Holy Land from the exactions and power of the infidels. The Pope took up the cause; and the kings, and princes, and the armed population of every country, assembled at the call to carry the cross to Mount Calvary. Now were presented the most extraordinary spectacles which the world ever saw: all Europe poured forth its inhabitants from the plains, the mountains, and glens of every country; "the people were turned from intestine discord to foreign war, from dull superstition to furious zeal." Men, who had never met but as mortal foes, now rushed forth to fight side by side in the same cause. The expeditions, which followed each other under various leaders, were in numbers more like the armed migrations of nations, than armies equipped for battle.

From ignorance of the countries through which they marched, and from deficiency of provisions, the severest hardships were endured; and in the first Crusade, out of 800,000 men, women, and children, who departed from Europe, only about 40,000 encamped before the walls of Jerusalem.

But it is foreign to the design of this notice, to go into details of the Crusades: the object is to illustrate the effects of cruel taxation. One great passion moved the millions who rushed to the plains of Palestine; but, mixed with that, there were other strong impulses and fierce emotions. Fanaticism and superstition were stirred

by the excitement of adventure, and by the desire for military renown, and the hopes of being able to avenge on the head of the unbeliever, the cruelties inflicted on the Christian, occasionally soothed the soul of the stern Crusader. But cupidity and avarice never lost their power from first to the last of the crusading expeditions. The active minds of the popes and clergy, who kept alive, for so many generations, the crusading disposition, had their attention always fixed upon the accumulation of property in the church; and the rapacity was at times carried to such lengths, as to defeat its own end by the disgust which it created among the laity.—On the other hand, the rapacious barons, with armed hand, at times relieved the church of its superfluous wealth. In several countries of Europe, a projected crusading expedition was almost an excuse for levying a tax on the people. In England a tax of 10 per cent on real and moveable property, called Saladin's tax, was levied by Henry II. And Richard the First, that romantic warrior but blood-thirsty savage, expended every shilling that he could raise in the Crusade, on the return from which he was made prisoner, and entailed such a heavy expense on his subjects for his ransom.

Fortunately for mankind, the credit or funding system was unknown in those ages, otherwise nations, for centuries afterwards, might have been called to pay interest on debts incurred to set up a gothic king on the throne of Jerusalem. But to Richard of England is due the merit, of having settled, by treaty with Saladin, the exemption of the people of the West from all taxes on making the pilgrimage to the holy sepulchre. This took place in the year 1191, about a hundred years after the first Crusade.

About this period, the spirit of crusading was becoming weak, and people were more and more reluctant to respond

to the calls of the pope and their kings to raise funds;—taxation cooled zeal: but as the fifth Crusade was led against Constantinople, which it carried by assault, and plundered of its immense wealth, the hope of pillage revived the religious desire to secure possession of the Holy Land; and for ninety years longer, the Aristocracies of Germany, of France, and of England, were rivals for the possession of the prize.*

The many centuries emphatically called the dark ages, were a period of darkness that might be felt. The only light that was perceived through the gloom, was the flickering rays from monasteries, reflected on the strongholds of robber-chiefs. Cupidity unrestrained, save by the danger of dividing the spoil, seized, throughout the greater part of Europe, the goods of every one not under the protection of a powerful chief. The bodies and souls of men were retained in pledge; the first enslaved by an armed power, and the latter kept in bondage by priests, who asserted an influence beyond the grave.

The law of the first-born, and the law of mortmain, though contradictory in their terms, agreed in securing to a barbarous Aristocracy, property and power acquired by

* It is not possible for the mind of a man, living in the present age, to conceive what would have been now the state of Europe, and of the world at large, had the Crusades not been undertaken. If the authorities, under whose power Palestine lay, had perceived their true interests, and had they encouraged pilgrimizing Europe, by consistent hospitality to the pilgrims, and protection to their property, instead of cruelly oppressing the devotees, and rousing the indignation and enterprising energies of the inhabitants of Europe, by the exaction of heavy taxes, the human mind would have remained in the sleep of the dark ages, and, at this day, dreams would have stupified the souls of men. But the world seems to be governed by an overruling Providence, through the cupidity and passions of men, as instruments to effect his purposes.

violence; and to a spiritual power, the accumulation of wealth gained by deception, or wrung from the remorse and fears of the dying sinner. On these two laws, as far as law was acknowledged, rested the system of temporal and spiritual dominion. Poverty, wretchedness, and gross ignorance were the lot and inheritance of the people, who occasionally in desperation broke out into revolt against their oppressors. Every country of Europe can furnish examples of scenes of violence and rapine by the chiefs, and of insurrection by the enslaved people. But it is not necessary to adduce here more than the rising of the French peasantry, about the middle of the fourteenth century. "The unfortunate cultivators of the soil sowed in fear, and reaped with pain; and in many places, ills more burdensome than human nature could bear, ground the labourer to the earth."* The consequence was, that they rose against the nobles, and, in the fury of revenge, massacred and destroyed for a while all that fell in their way. After the insurrection was put down, and numbers of the peasants were taken prisoners, and examined, the only reason that they could give for their rising was, that "*they were miserable!*" Had Caillet, the leader of the peasants, been able to have restrained them from committing excesses, and had he succeeded in uniting them, to secure a charter of freedom, he would have appeared, in history, the Tell or the Bruce of his country. What a lesson to governments! and what a responsibility falls on them, if they despise it! The laws of a country are oppressive, when the great mass of the population are miserable, and driven into tumults.

But it takes centuries before nations, or their rulers, whether regal or aristocratic, will learn wisdom.

The insurrection of the Jacquerie took place in the

*_James's Jacquerie.

year 1358; and in 1766 an insurrection of nearly a similar nature broke out in Bohemia and Hungary. The cultivators of the soil of those countries were ground down by severe exactions. They chiefly held their lands on the condition of giving three or four days' labour in the week to the landlords. This was equivalent to about fifty per cent. of the gross produce of the land as rent. The cultivators were very unhappy, and were at times dependent on the owners of the land for corn, to be replaced from the next harvest; they held their lands at the pleasure of their lords. A people, in such a miserable condition are driven to extremities, either by their own misery—or they become tools, and are instigated to violence by bad men for political purposes. The peasants of Bohemia were almost universally in a state of insurrection, and they menaced with massacre the nobility and rich proprietors; and it required an army of 28,000 men from the Austrian government, before tranquillity was restored.

This popular movement will perhaps be represented in general history as an effort to murder proprietors, and plunder property, for the mere love of violence—it will probably be held forth, as an instance of the disposition innate in a multitude to cruel and destructive measures. But, before a verdict be pronounced, let men reflect on circumstances. Between man and man in a court of justice, is there no allowance made for provocation by one of them for the violent assault of the other? Provoking words, or even looks, may, in the mind of a judge, palliate or justify a blow. It is a terrible thing when a people rise up, as one man, to take vengeance in their own hands: but men are not brutes, to remain for ever submissive, and devour the garbage that is thrown down to them, but they are beings with many good qualities, and some bad ones; and if the former be more cultivated, and less apprehension

entertained of the latter, the world would go on without insurrections or wars. "It is the oppressor who has made man fit only for the yoke."

But coming down to the present day, there is the hope of melioration for the descendants of the men whom misery drove into violence seventy years before.

It would appear that the principles of an Agrarian law have been established in Transylvania, and also the recognition of civil rights to the inhabitants of that country. It was declared "that every man ought to participate in the general affairs of the common country—" that in future every man, whether noble or not, shall be entitled to acquire and possess landed property"—"that every man shall have the right of instituting legal proceedings"—"that the peasants shall be held qualified to dispose freely of any property acquired by them"—"that the power of inflicting corporal punishment shall be entirely withdrawn from the lord of the soil."* These are most valuable concessions to a portion of the Austrian population, and will remind the Briton of the law of Magna Charta, and of the law which removed the restriction on his ancestor from the possession of lands and other property.

Throughout the whole of the world, nations are struggling to free themselves from fiscal oppression, and therefore to secure to the inhabitants political liberty, and civilization. In the present year, 1842, we have seen France nearly thrown into convulsion by the strict exaction of taxes by the government.† And in Mexico a change of political power has been effected by one party that took its

* This is copied from the *Atlas* newspaper of 24th Sept. 1842, extracted from some German paper.

† This refers to the state of high excitement approaching in several districts to insurrectionary outbreaks of the population, in consequence of the rigour exercised by the government in the collecting of certain taxes.

stand on a reform of the system of levying duties on commodities.

Spain has been repeatedly appealed to, in the course of this work, for examples to illustrate the fatal consequences of a policy opposed to the interests of a country, and unsuited to the genius of its inhabitants; and as a confirmation of the truth of the observations made, the following picture of the state of that interesting country in 1842, drawn by the deputation of Cadiz, is given:—"The evils experienced by the Spanish people from time immemorial, have proceeded from their imperfect economical or fiscal laws. These laws have actually dried up the proper sources of public wealth; have kept the government in constant distress and difficulties; and multiplied contributions and taxes to such an extent, that it may be said that the tree of wealth has been actually cut down in order to gather its fruits. And all this, for what end? That the cotton manufacturers of Catalonia may thrive, and that smugglers may seize upon the revenues belonging of right to the Treasury, and the commerce of the country perish. The same line of inquiry and reflection will cause you to observe, that agriculture, the great fountain of national wealth and prosperity, is being borne down by the superabundance of its own productions, because our fiscal laws prevent their exportation, and induce foreign nations to deal only with those, where they find that just and salutary commercial reciprocity which is denied them by the laws of Spain."*

Such is the present condition of a nation that once had the Netherlands under its dominion, that once threatened England with invasion, and that in the pride of empire assumed titles and prerogatives, which could only be sur-

* See Circular addressed by the deputation of Cadiz to the provincial deputations of Spain, dated 21 May, 1842.—*Times*, 24th June

passed by those of Asiatic pretension. And yet the Spaniards, in all ages, have performed heroic exploits. About thirty years ago, the defence of Saragoza was worthy of a patriotic people resolved to die at their post; and about two thousand years before that event, the fate of Numantia was calculated to awe the world, by the spectacle of the inhabitants and defenders of a city preferring to perish voluntarily, rather than fall into the hands of the Romans who besieged them. Numantia, indeed, put at defiance the whole power of that conquering people.

A sketch of the history of the Roman people has been already given with considerable detail, but, in illustration of the subject treated of in this section, an event that happened about a hundred years before the siege of Numantia, will be referred to.

This event was the irruption of the Gauls into Italy, about 225 years before the Christian era,—an event that carried consternation to Rome itself, and showed how dangerous it was for one people to exercise harsh measures towards another. It would appear, that a certain tract of country was rented or leased of the Roman people by the Gauls for the use of their flocks and herds. That a law was enacted by the senate, that the lands thus conditionally assigned should be withdrawn, and distributed amongst Roman colonists.

This attempt to deprive them of the lands united the Gauls in a common cause, and they took up arms, crossed the Appenine mountains, and carried the war so as to threaten the capital. The Romans were so alarmed, that they called out all the men capable of bearing arms, and they assembled, to about the number of seven hundred thousand.

About the time that the barbarians rushed like a torrent

through Italy, Hannibal led his legions over the Alps, and carried for a season victory in his march. But a people like the Romans, with every freeman possessed of some title to his native soil, might lose battles, but could not be subdued, and they triumphed over their fierce and inveterate foes.

The observations as yet made in this section, have failed very much in their object, if the following positions have not been established by them:

That taxation, or the encroachment on a people's means of subsistence, if unjust in principle, partial in distribution, or severe in pressure, will cause a high-spirited and enlightened people to bring the question to issue by an appeal to arms—will, in other circumstances, force a nation to rise up, and, under the influence of distress, burst forth into violence, and overturn the very fabric of society—will, among a people of disjointed materials, and of deficient energy, act like a curse on the soil, so as “to cause the tree to be cut down for its fruit,”—will, among a fierce and barbarous people, rouse the passions of fanaticism and revenge, and spread fire and sword wherever defenceless men and women are to be found as victims.

As practical lessons are designed by these notices, it will be well to take one from the terrible calamity that befell the British arms in Cabul, where the barbarous tribes were roused, to overwhelm in slaughter an entire army, because our government in India thought proper to withhold a tribute which it had stipulated to pay to the chiefs of the tribes that caused such disasters.*

* Since the above was written, the British Army has evacuated Afghanistan, after having released the prisoners who were kept under the power of the native chiefs, and restored them to their country.

PART II.

PASSAGES FROM ENGLISH HISTORY, PREVIOUS TO THE REVOLUTION OF 1688,
ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE HARSH NATURE OF TAXATION STIMULATING THE
NATIONAL CHARACTER.

IN another branch of this work, a sketch is given of the progress of fiscal despotism in this country, from the reign of Charles the First down to the alteration, in 1842, of the tariff, and the imposition of a tax on the income of the industrious citizen. In this section, a few passages from English history, previous to the civil wars which led to the Revolution of 1688, will be adduced, in order to show how taxation stimulates society.

The Roman period was one of iron rule, and was characterized by the dead calm of a province of a powerful empire, or only disturbed by the inroads of barbarous tribes. The persons and properties of the inhabitants were completely at the mercy of the conquerors. The abandonment of the country by the Romans in the fifth century, was the signal for a domestic struggle among the various tribes or nations of the island, and for an irruption of Saxons, Danes, and other races, from the neighbouring continent. The Danish invaders were the most ruthless in their exactions, as they appeared, in their fiscal character, to possess hearts of flint and arms of iron; and they imposed a land-tax, to which history and tradition have given the odious name of "Dane-gelt." The object of those ferocious hordes, was rather to overrun and plunder the country, than to seize and settle on its lands.

Alfred was a king raised to make head against them, but his romantic and glorious career was insufficient to turn them off from the shores of the island,

The annals of the country, from the departure of the Romans to the descent of William of Normandy, tell the tale, oft repeated, of the imposition of harsh taxation, and of outbreak and insurrection of the people.

The inhabitants were divided into two classes—freemen and slaves—both exposed to the taxing power.

In those rude times, any symptom of civilization, and love of the arts of peace, that appears, is hailed with satisfaction in the present age:—such as the law of Athelstan, for the promotion of commerce, by raising every merchant who had made three voyages of trade, to the rank of noble.

A few years before the Conquest, there occurred an incident, that displayed the powerful effect which the extreme misery of the people produced on the mind of Godiva, the queen of the country. This misery was caused by the excessive taxation imposed by her despotic husband, and so roused her sympathy as to make her sacrifice herself by riding naked through the town, as the condition, or penance, fixed by the tyrant, for redeeming the people from their miseries; and how terrible this state of affairs must have been, thus to overcome, in the mind of the noble Godiva, the feelings of female modesty!

This abjectness of condition of the people, produced by the fiscal power, and the ignorance caused by the spiritual dominion of a corrupt priesthood, prepared the way for the advance of the Norman and his relentless followers, to the possession of the property, and to the command over the lives, of all orders and classes of men in the country. From these two circumstances, can also be accounted for, the ease with which any determined band or horde of foreign barbarians could overrun and occupy the soil.

This may be the proper place to refer to the humiliating fact, established by the history of the British Islands, that

a foreign enemy once landed on their shores in such force as to maintain his ground, has always either subdued the inhabitants first settled, or established himself in an independent position. The Roman conquest is not particularly adduced as a case in point, because that people were so infinitely superior to the natives in military power and discipline, and in the knowledge of the arts of peace, and science of government, that their conquest and occupation of the country were similar to proceedings in the present day, of white men armed with the musket against naked and almost defenceless savages. But the wonder is, to see tribes of mixed races come over from the opposite shores of Germany, Denmark, Holland, and France, and take the country from the hands of inhabitants, of the same stamina and courage as themselves; for, man to man, the British islands have always reared a people equal to any race of men on the earth. This is a very interesting subject of inquiry, but there is no space here to go into it, and all that can be attempted is, to point to the peculiar condition of the society, arising from the insular nature of the territory.

In ancient times, when there was little commercial intercourse with foreign nations, facilities were afforded to the chiefs exercising the military and political power, to curb their subjects, deprived of every chance of getting foreign aid, or of escaping to foreign countries. An enemy making a descent on an island does so at great advantage; he has the excitement of an assailant, and dashes on with high hopes and spirits. The attack is necessarily a sudden one, if winds and weather be at all favourable to the enterprise, and it may be made on a point where the inhabitants are taken by surprise, and perhaps beaten and dispersed in considerable force. In all attacks from seaward on a people, a sudden surprise is a victory, which, promptly followed

up, may lead to the most decisive results. An insular people naturally confide in the security of their position, and are therefore thrown off their guard by the unexpected appearance of a foreign enemy on their shores. A people with a land-frontier against an enemy, can always have their eye directed to the points of danger, and be ready to defend them.

The last time that Great Britain saw and heard the confusion and uproar of battle within her borders, was within these last hundred years; and the proceedings of the Pretender, in the year 1745, throw a fearful interest on this subject. Although the rebellion was expected by the government to break out, the country was so completely taken by surprise by the flash of arms, that had the Pretender to the crown acted more like a soldier, and pushed his advantages, instead of wasting time in the mummeries of royalty in the palace at Edinburgh, there is little doubt that he could have marched into the capital itself, and seized the treasury of the kingdom. As it was, he penetrated into England, notwithstanding the distracted nature of his own military counsels, which brought on the ruin of his cause. The real defenders of a country are its inhabitants, and not foreign armies: but if the mass of the population be slaves, or in circumstances of extreme misery, perhaps they will view the yoke of a foreigner preferable to the grinding power of domestic tyrants. Prince Charles, in his manifesto to the inhabitants of Great Britain and Ireland, and to foreign states, urged as arguments for his cause, the oppressed state of the tenants of these countries, and the system of intimidation and bribery practised at elections of members of the legislature. From this digression let us go back to ancient times.

As William held out to the French the spoils of England

as the reward of conquest, it is not to be wondered that he conquered the country. But the re-establishment of the hateful tax of Danegelt, and other exactions, roused the patient Saxons; and his power, though so great, was at times in danger of being overthrown by the insurrections which broke out in various districts. The country was at length quieted, rather by the extermination than the subjection of the people of the disturbed districts.

The weak and unprincipled Stephen, in order to secure his usurped throne, made concessions to the clergy and the nobility, which enabled them still farther to oppress the miserable inhabitants. As Danegelt was a tax on land, it was abolished for ever, to satisfy the two powerful orders.

The taxes raised during the reign of the crusading Richard, went abroad to defray the expense of his expeditions, or to ransom him from the power of his enemy.

The existing and all future generations of Britons ought to read with grateful fervour the records of the taxes imposed by the cruel, cowardly, and licentious tyrant, John—for, to the effects from those taxes they are indebted, under the direction of Providence, for the great charter of their liberties. The history of the brief and troubled reign of that weak and violent person, is just an account of acts of rapacity and confiscation of lands and property belonging to the barons, clergy, and of every individual possessed of anything worth seizing. He made a traffic of every thing, and liberty and justice were sold as commodities in the market.

So universal was the detestation of John, that he could not trust his own subjects, but employed foreign mercenaries to execute his commands, and ravage the counties marked out for devastation. The consequences are too well known to need description.

The great charter was drawn up to secure something in favour of every class of the people, even down to the serf of the soil; and of so much importance was it considered by succeeding generations, that it was solemnly ratified thirty-five times, by various kings, within two hundred years from its first confirmation.*

The immense value of the great charter was experienced during the long reign of fifty-six years of the succeeding monarch, Henry III., as under him the Commons began to be a distinct and powerful body in the community; and they first assembled in a separate and independent chamber. In this reign, the first example was given of requiring a confirmation of the charter, before a grant of money should be given to the king.

But, notwithstanding all these precautions, it would appear, that between the sovereign of the country and the pope of Rome, both laity and clergy were exposed to severe exactions; and it was calculated that Italian priests derived from England, revenues about three times the amount of the revenue of the king. The Jews were deprived of a third of their treasures and effects, and in the following reign were banished from the kingdom. This reign is memorable for the introduction into use of coal, to which England has been indebted for so much of her greatness.

During the reign of the first three Edwards, comprising a period of one hundred and five years, the consequences of the great charter were more and more developed, and England rose in power and influence in proportion as the

* The original document, which ought to be preserved as a sacred national object, was described by a member of the House of Commons, on the 13th of July, 1842, "as being deposited in a glass-case in the British Museum, along with a pair of Esquimaux breeches!"

people advanced in wealth and intelligence; but these two terms are taken relatively to the past, for a very wide gulf had yet to be crossed, to reach the improved condition of society in after ages. The capacity and active talents of the first and third Edward, contributed much to the improved state of the nation, but the heroic exertions of Robert Bruce, checked the designs and humbled the pride of the second Edward. Within this period of one hundred and five years, there were several laws passed, which produced important effects on the state of society, by their economic tendencies.

The first was, the enactment which checked the acquisition of property by the clergy, who basely took advantage of the ignorance of the people, and extorted from them grants of lands and houses, as the price of the pardon of their sins. The second was the law which laid the foundation of the entail of estates through a given line of successors: this may be denominated the foundation-stone of the colossus of aristocratic power in this kingdom.

But the most important law which was passed in the reign of Edward I. was that containing the principle "THAT NO TAX SHOULD BE LEVIED WITHOUT CONSENT OF THE KNIGHTS, CITIZENS, AND BURGESSES, ASSEMBLED IN PARLIAMENT." And to give effect to that important law, it was enacted in the following reign, that the king should hold a parliament "once a year, or twice if need be."

A great amount of confiscation was made by the seizure of all the lands, houses, and other properties, belonging to the Knights Templars. The pope was the great mover in this scheme of spoliation, and so enormous was the rapacity of his holiness, that his power became an object of jealousy; and the English parliament, under Edward III., stated that the taxes levied by him were five times the

amount of those exacted by the king, and that every thing was venal at Rome. This monarch passed a statute excluding foreigners from ecclesiastical preferment, and reducing the papal authority in England; and the demand of the pope for the payment of the tribute granted by King John, was rejected by the king and parliament. In the latter part of the reign of Edward III., a tax of two shillings on every tun of wine, and sixpence in the pound of all merchandise, was imposed, for the protection of merchant ships and foreign trade. This was the origin of the famous tunnage and poundage duty, the illegal enactment of which by Charles I. produced such important results.*

About the middle of the fourteenth century, it would appear that the physical condition of labourers, notwithstanding the barbarity of the age, was superior to that of great masses at present in Great Britain. The sumptuary laws show this. Servants were not allowed to eat flesh or fish above once a day. If a labourer boarded with his master, one third of his wages was deducted as the price of his subsistence.† In the present day a labourer has to expend at least two-thirds of his hard-worn shilling on food alone!

Under the weak and unfortunate Richard II., (1377-1399,) rebellions of the nobles, and general insurrections of the people, followed harsh measures of appropriation and unequal taxation, as effects from causes. That monarch fell a victim to the usurper of his crown, and his ill-acquired treasures became the prize of the same successful adven-

* In 1340, Edward III. assumed the title of King of France, which was retained by the kings of Great Britain to the year 1815.

† This refers to the laws of Edward III. passed in 1349 and 1363, regulating the wages of labourers, and fixing the quality and quantity of clothing that they might wear.

turer. The tunnage and poundage taxes were doubled in this reign, but the exactions which marked it with such deeds of violence, were capitation-taxes, at first graduated to the rank and property of the citizens, but afterwards charged as a general poll-rate on all classes and ranks of the people, without distinction of sex, above fifteen years of age. Although the pillage and ruin, to which the labouring classes were exposed under their arbitrary government, were greatly distressing to them; still the harshness of the mode of levying the taxes exasperated their feelings.

An incident that occurred, roused the celebrated Walter Tyler, a tradesman in the town of Dartford, to take vengeance for an insulting rudeness to his daughter, committed by a ruffianly tax-gatherer, whom the enraged and indignant father cut down at one blow. This accident changed the position and character of Tyler, who found himself suddenly at the front of a vast multitude of armed followers, whom he led to London against the King and Aristocracy of his country. The demands which were made showed the advanced state of popular opinion in favour of civil liberty, and a charter was granted by King Richard, declaratory of the freedom of the insurgents, and of the abolition of all servitude and villanage. A great popular revolution, which would have changed the destiny of England, was on the point of completion, when it was checked and smothered by circumstances of a personal nature. In an interview between Richard and Tyler, the latter became excited, on the King hesitating to pronounce the abolition of the forest and game laws, whereupon Walworth, the mayor of London, suspecting the intentions of the popular leader, struck him to the heart with his dagger. This blow, aimed with sure direction at the chief, roused his followers, who grasped their weapons to

avenge the deed ; when the king, at the very instant of the crisis, with presence of mind and calmness, exclaimed to the multitude, "What means this clamour—Will you kill your king?—Come, I will be your leader; follow me to the fields, and what you ask, you shall have." The spirit and confidence thus displayed did more to disarm the revolution than any force that could be brought against it; and the circumstances show, in a most striking manner, how a blow well aimed, and a word timely uttered, are able, like the interposition of a superior power, to turn from its course an event that was about to overwhelm a nation. But it is only the history of a rude age that can present incidents of such a dramatic character. The concessions which had been made to Tyler and his followers were rescinded, and many hundreds of the prisoners taken, perished by the hand of the executioner.

The period from the death of Richard II. to the accession of Henry VII., a space of eighty-six years, was a most unhappy one for the people of England. No advantage was gained from the wars of Edward III. in France, save the name of some fruitless victories, which only flattered the ambition of the king who won them. These wars and some flashing victories were continued to the death of Henry V. when, happily for the English people, and still more so for the French, an end was put to military expeditions, which exhausted this country as much as they devastated France. But after the death of Henry V. followed the civil wars, which continued for about thirty years, until the ambitious pretensions of two families were quashed by the union of the interests of the two factions under the seventh Henry.

Wars with France and Scotland—cruel civil wars—military burdens, and exactions on the people to gratify the

ambition of kings, or to increase the power of the Aristocracy, distinguished that long period.

The reign of Henry VII. was an important epoch in the history of England. The cupidity of this king acted as a stimulus to the people, to rouse themselves from their lethargy, and we find that, in several parts of the kingdom, there were insurrections, caused by the severity of taxation. But the most active principle put in motion during this reign, was contained in the Agrarian law, which broke the entails of estates, and caused their alienation to other hands. Many great properties were thus dismembered, and distributed among many citizens.

This reign is also distinguished by several events of great consequence that took place, unconnected with this country, but which have had more influence on it than on any other nation of Europe. These were—the discovery of America, and the invention of printing; the opening of the passage by sea to the East Indies, was also a circumstance which eventually led to a British empire in India.

Here these jottings from English history must end, in order to proceed to the consideration of other matters connected with the circumstances of this country.

CHAP. XI.

CONFISCATION OF PROPERTY, AND REFORMATION IN RELIGION.

SACERDOTAL EXACTIONS — REGAL AND ARISTOCRATIC CUPIDITY — THE
ECONOMIC CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF THE REFORMATION — THEY FORMED A
GREAT PROPRIETORY REVOLUTION.

SACERDOTAL exactions from the people, and exemption of the clergy from the burdens, have created more evils to society, and kept it longer in a state of torpor, than all political taxation put together. This must necessarily be the case, as the canon law is a much more serious matter than a lay act of legislation, and a church a much more durable body than a government.

The history of sacerdotal encroachments on the property of a country, would present schemes of deep-laid spoliation perfectly astounding.* Before William of Normandy landed with his army, it is calculated that more than a third of all the lands in England were in the possession of the clergy, exempted from the payment of all taxes, and even military services. So that the ruthless hand of the conqueror, by dividing the lands among his barons, effected an improvement in the country.

This circumstance shows what a singular combination could take place in human affairs, when an event so violent

* The Church-reserves of public lands in Canada are a proof of this : the proportion allowed by law was one-seventh, but the clergy, or their agents, in the act of measuring, contrived to make it a fifth, and, in fact, they secured about half the land in some districts.—*Durham's Report on Canada.*

as the conquest might be considered an amelioration of the condition of a country.

Within two or three generations of men, the cycle of an unjust and oppressive system of lay-taxation, may perhaps be wound up; but it will require more than a thousand years before priestly usurpations shall be put down, or modified by the people subject to the payment.

Previous to the third century, the ministers of the christian religion were maintained by *voluntary* contributions raised among the faithful; and it would appear that the amount collected was so liberal wherever churches were established, as to tempt the holders of the fund to unfair and partial distribution. "The commencement of the third century was also distinguished by the effort to exact as a right, and on the authority of the Levitical law, the contributions which had been hitherto solicited on the more generous terms of christian equity, or of christian benevolence."* About the same time began the attempts of the secular power to encroach on the increasing wealth of the christian churches; and down to the Reformation in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the avarice of the clergy and the cupidity of the civil government were in constant action, to secure the spoils wrung from the people. In the beginning of the third century, the people of Christendom were partly wheedled and partly frightened into the endurance of tithes; and to the present hour, even in Protestant England, the soil is robbed of the tenth of its produce, to support a church as an instrument of state, for political purposes.† The vast wealth of the clergy of England was coveted by the arbitrary Henry VIII, and his confiscation

* Vaughan's Introduction to the Life of Wycliffe, page 30.

† The statistics of tithes, showing the enormity of the exaction on certain articles of produce are extremely curious, and ought to be condensed, and

of the religious houses and their revenues put him in funds to celebrate the Reformation. The change of property at the Reformation effected good by stimulating industry, although at the same time the public were defrauded of an immense amount, which passed into the hands of families who paid no valuable consideration.

On considering the state of affairs in Europe, during the dark ages, down to the middle of the sixteenth century, it will be perceived that most of the events originated in the desire of the church and its branches to possess themselves of the property of the laity. The persecutions of popes and synods, the fires, the racks, and the dungeons of the Inquisition, were raised and employed, as much with the view to bring under confiscation to the church, the property of heretics, as to punish their bodies and torment their minds for disobedience to the requirements of the rubric.*

Long before Luther and Calvin appeared, to dispel the delusions of the Church of Rome, by the presentation of the Bible to the people, the rapacity of the clergy had awakened a pretty general desire in England to get free of

added as a *fortieth* article, to the Articles of the Church of England. It would appear, on the authority of the Rev. — Harlett, quoted in a note at p. 290 of Chalmers's Political Economy, that the tithe of an acre of hops, raised on land worth forty or fifty shillings an acre, is generally worth from £3 to £4. And the value of the tithe of an acre of carrot-seed, raised on land not worth 20s. an acre, is from seven to eight pounds, equal to a tax of seven or eight hundred per cent. on the rental †

To make a tenth produce seven hundred, is truly a modern miracle of the church †

* The unhappy Jews have in every age been objects of persecution, and victims of cupidity.—In Spain the Inquisition made the most of them.—In the fifteenth century, on the expulsion of the whole race from Spain, their property fell a prey to power, both lay and sacerdotal. A house was given for an ass to carry the unfortunate owner—and a vineyard was exchanged for suit of clothes, or for a weapon of defence.—*Milt's Crusades.*

their exactions. The satirist had also employed his ridicule to turn the world's laugh against the pretension and hypocrisy of the priests and monks.

The pope always found the English people the most intractable of all his spiritual subjects. The kings of England were jealous of their prerogative and of foreign interference, and the people did not like the exaction. But notwithstanding these dispositions, it is wonderful to think how much wealth was extracted from the country. Out of the long and heavy list of burdens by the church, from tithes down to candles and ribbons for the honour of the images of saints, perhaps the most extraordinary was the tax paid by England to the church of Rome, commonly called Peter's pence. This originated early in the eighth century, and consisted of a tax of one penny on each householder possessed of thirty pence a year: it was voluntarily offered to the pope by the king of the West Saxons, for the purpose of supporting a college at Rome for the education of Englishmen. But it was afterwards claimed by the pope as a tribute due by England, but was disputed by the English, who, however could not get free from their spiritual bondage, and fiscal oppression: and, strange to say, this tax was continued to be paid for upwards of *eight hundred years* before it was finally abolished by Henry VIII.

This formed a striking instance of the tenacity of sacerdotal disposition, and it ought to be an example to a people, of the danger of allowing the fingers of priests to get into their pockets.

The Reformation of religion in England was a great revolution. The inquisitiveness of men, and the mental activity which was both the cause and effect of it, had created a demand for writings, and this increased demand no doubt stimulated the invention of Faust to produce the

printing press. The first great blessing of the Reformation, was the Bible, in its integrity, put into the hands of the people, who were at once thereby liberated from the mental thralldom to the church of Rome. But the business here is with the economical consequences of that important event.

It has been argued in this Work, that the danger to the property of the inhabitants of a country is to be apprehended from the designs and efforts of a comparatively small number of individuals, incorporated as a Church, or an Aristocracy, and not from the multitude or mass of the people. This position is fully substantiated by the history of the English church down to the Reformation. The state of its property at the conquest has already been referred to. Willham used no more ceremony with it, than with the property of the laity, but, notwithstanding his proceedings, the church continued to draw to itself such large masses, that Edward the First, in 1279, endeavoured to restrain the acquisition by passing a law to limit the mortmain occupation of real property. In spite of all his precaution, it was found at the Reformation, when Henry VIII. stepped into the possessions of the church, that the clergy were proprietors of seven-tenths of the property of the whole kingdom, being more than double the proportion of what the clergy possessed in 1066. Had an enlightened and patriotic monarch been on the throne of England when the property reverted to the state, an opportunity was afforded for an Agrarian law, which would at once have placed England in circumstances of comfort and independence. But the distribution of the lands and property was preferable in any mode, to lying in possession of worldly clergy, or slothful and debauched monks.

A great quantity was wasted in the wars and intrigues of Henry, and much also found its way into improper

hands, but on the whole there was a pretty general movement and transfer of property, which beneficially affected the circumstances of the country, and gave a spur to the people. The nation at least ceased to be tributary to Rome, and the vast amount of wealth, that formerly left the country to pamper foreign ecclesiastics, now remained at home, to foster agriculture and commerce. The change was favourably seen in the following reigns; and so strong did the national spirit become, that within one hundred years from the death of Henry, the people were struggling for their great constitutional rights, which they eventually secured by the Revolution of 1688.

The inestimable value of the religious freedom secured by the Reformation in England and Scotland, causes the economic and fiscal changes which accompanied and followed that revolution to be overlooked, or considered as mere secondary matters. But, in truth, nothing ever happened in any nation to form a parallel to the Revolution in this country, which at once placed at the absolute disposal of the government, more than two-thirds of the whole property of the kingdom, real and personal, except the proprietary revolution in ancient Egypt, under the wise and beneficent administration of Joseph.

The moral and religious effects of the Reformation are, to this hour, operating throughout a great part of the world, and are, of course, of a value incalculably greater than the price of all the lands in England at that period, or since. The freedom of thought, on the highest of all subjects, acquired by the Reformation, led to an inquisitiveness and mental activity, which displayed themselves in all branches of knowledge, and were practically fixed on the arts and sciences. Navigation, colonization, commerce, manufactures, and all other arts that increase and secure the com-

fort and happiness of man, were improved and extended through the world: and taking a comprehensive view of affairs, without reference to the genius of the people of the respective countries, we see, at this day, the nations that adopted the principles of the Reformation, the most advanced in the arts and improvements enumerated. On this fact there can be no difference of opinion.

There is one circumstance which has been remarked by every person, who has considered the subject, as sufficient of itself to account for a great part of the superior comfort and wealth of the inhabitants of Protestant countries, over those under the Catholic system. In round numbers, it may be stated that, including Sundays, half the year is wasted in holidays in strict Catholic countries. The calendar will show the *exact* number of holidays, but it will not give an estimate of the loss to the community, by the idleness and dissipation continued after the cessation of the holidays. In Protestant countries, the Sundays, with two or three more days in the year, form the times of cessation from labour; these constitute about a seventh of the year: so that, in round numbers, Protestants labour about 100 days more in the year than Catholics, and add in that proportion so much more to the national wealth.

The Reformation in this country was a great economic revolution. Viewing it in this light, it matters not how or when the proprietors of the lands and moveables got possession of them: their titles might have been derived from violence, from fraud, or from spiritual influence misapplied, but the fact was, the titles were guaranteed by the law of the country; and the church, and its members, under the denomination of popes, archbishops, bishops, and priests of various grades, were the acknowledged proprietors of the lands and houses, of the gold and silver plate, of the libraries and other valuables—all of which were confiscated

and seized by the king, or government, of the country, and by him appropriated to his own selfish and ambitious projects—distributed among his favourites—or sold in the general market. The brutal and lustful character of Henry VIII., was perceived in the whole scheme of the spoliation. In the history of this unparalleled event, there is no account of any portion of the immense property confiscated, having been appropriated to any purpose strictly national. It is an historical mystery, how the vast wealth was disposed of. Not a shilling was expended on fortifications roads, bridges, harbours, or on any undertaking for the security or convenience of the people. The nation acquired nothing by the event, but the example, or precedent, of a general scheme of confiscation of property, to be imitated whenever circumstances might demand the repetition. But it lost in one respect by the transfer of property.*

It would appear generally from the time of the conquest, that the clergy had to contribute from their property, a due proportion to the burdens of the country—indeed, church possessions were at all times objects of temptation to the kings and their nobles, so that the clergy found it their interest rather to be liberal, than to excite against themselves the covetous principle in the governing power.

But the great bulk of the lands went to increase the properties of the old aristocratic families, or to create properties for new families, to replace those exterminated in the civil wars, which were terminated by the accession to the throne of Henry VII. By the personal destruction of the armed aristocrats of influence, the power of the order was weakened, but it gradually rose from the time of the

* The foregoing observations refer only to what was retained by the king, and do not include the large property transferred to the Protestant establishment.

Reformation, and struggled to throw off the burdens of taxation on land : and so effectually had the aristocratic order accomplished its object, that in the reign of James II., in little more than a hundred years from the death of Henry VIII., the land-tax had entirely disappeared from the public accounts ; and as the people had improved their own circumstances by means already referred to, half the revenue of the kingdom was derived from duties on articles of consumption, namely :—

Excise on beer and ale,	£666,000.—Duties on
wine and vinegar,	£182,000.—Duties on
French brandy, silk, &c.	£93,000.—Duties on
sugar and tobacco,	£149,000.
	£1,090,000
Tonnage duty,	£600,000.—Hearth money
£245,000.—Post office,	65,000.
	910,000

Total public revenue, 1688, £2,000,000

The deeper that the proprietary principle, and the fiscal system existent in this country, be examined and analyzed, the stronger will become the confirmation of the position that property is endangered by the few, and not by the multitude.

Considering the partition of the property of this country caused by the Reformation, it will be perceived that the opportunity was lost of laying the foundation of national greatness on an equitable adjustment of interests.—But a more selfish and ruthless despot could scarcely have been appointed to carry into effect the revolution of property.—Had it taken place under the sway of Henry VII., there might have been the expectation of an Agrarian law, which would have raised in the scale of civilization, a great body of the people. The avaricious disposition of that monarch would have made him secure for himself a large portion of the spoil ; but his jealousy of the aristocracy, and his policy

of depressing the order, would have increased his sympathy for the inferior classes of society, when he had the means of raising them to property and influence.

Henry the Seventh, was the son of Mr. Owen Tudor, a Welshman, by Catharine the widow of Henry V., and as his father was said to have been the son of a brewer, we may thus account, by physiological process, for the stalwart character of that king, his son Henry VIII., and granddaughter Queen Elizabeth.

Servius Tullius, or George Washington, would have divided the public lands acquired by the Revolution among their countrymen, on principles that would have secured the comfort, happiness, and consequently the independence, of all parties in the State.

As a corollary from the proprietary revolution in England at the Reformation, the establishment of the Protestant church in Ireland may be here referred to. But as forfeitures of lands took place in that country, for attempts to throw off the yoke of England, penalties for rebellion were added to confiscation of church-property. As the inhabitants of Ireland were almost all Catholics, it became necessary to send Protestants to set up a Protestant church, and about half the quantity of the land of the natives of that island, was divided among the English colonists who settled there.

But the natives have obstinately refused to become converts to the Protestant faith, notwithstanding the existence of about a score of Protestant bishops and a host of clergymen, who have screwed tithes and other exactions out of the unhappy people, for upwards of two hundred years. This sketch will suffice to convey an idea of the origin, progress, and present state of the Protestant church in Ireland.

Whenever examples of the degraded state of a country are wanted for elucidation, and whenever pictures of abject poverty, nakedness, and misery, are required by the politi-

cal economist or romancer, Ireland is sure to be the country whence the examples are taken and the pictures drawn. Its degradation, and the destitution of its inhabitants, arise from its Agrarian system. Ireland was first conquered, and then colonized by England, and for centuries has been exposed to all the malignant influences of the British system of colonization. One of the worst of these, the reckless assignment of the lands in large grants to favoured individuals, was in full vigour in the settlement of the Protestant scheme. Ireland became at that period, and has continued to the present day, the hot-bed of party strife and corruption, and the seat of all the evils that afflict a country, under the irresponsible rule of a faction, alien to the disposition and character of its inhabitants. The bitterness of religious animosity has been mixed, during the last two centuries, with the rancour of political hatred and contempt. Ireland has been kept in a state of subjection, by its proximity to the dominant island. It has been ruled on the principle of a conquered colony: and had the Atlantic, instead of a narrow channel of the sea, separated the two countries, long ere this it would have achieved a national independence.

The causes of the degraded Agrarian state of the bulk of the inhabitants of Ireland and of Hindostan, are precisely similar in their nature. The Zamindary system placed the mass of the population of the latter country completely under the power of the landlords, who, through their various agents, scarcely left sufficient food, whereon the miserable cultivators might exist. But the government stepped forward to save the people, by gradually getting into its own possession, the lands, and throwing out the middle-men, who stood between the cultivators and their subsistence. The government thus became the land-owner,

and fixed an equitable rent, or land-tax, to be paid annually by the occupiers of the ground. In this system, much will of course depend on the intelligence and integrity of the collectors employed by the government, but a responsibility must be attached to the office of collector, who should be kept strictly under it. The miseries of Ireland are matters of public notoriety, as arising from the existence of a numerous class of middle-men.

At the Reformation in the reign of Henry VIII., and on the colonization of Ireland, before and after the Revolution of 1688, the principles of proprietary rights were twice violated: first, by the confiscation in a sweeping manner of the property belonging to the church, and to the natives of the country; and secondly, by the violent and unjust appropriation of the lands, houses, and moveables thus confiscated, by the party who committed the act of spoliation. A great and *general* benefit ought properly to justify a restoration of property belonging to a church, or a portion of the community. In the proprietary revolutions in England, and in the seizure and occupation of the lands of Ireland, the daring of the robber has been united with the low cunning of the thief.*

* *A Memoir of Ireland, Native and Saxon, by Daniel O'Connell.* As these pages are passing through the press, the author of them has seen the above-mentioned extraordinary work by Mr. O'Connell, but he has only as yet glanced at the contents. However, he has read quite sufficient to convince him, that a state of matters has existed, and is allowed to exist, in Ireland, which will most assuredly, sooner or later, call down on England the indignation of mankind for such an outrage, committed by this country on the Irish population. Humanity itself is trampled under foot on the soil of Ireland, and the civilized nations of the world will rouse themselves to demand redress for the unhappy natives, and if justice be not done, and that speedily and effectually, they will be as much justified in stepping forward to avert the destruction of the Irish people, as England, France, and Russia were justified, by civilized and christian principles, in rescuing the Greeks

But without examining, too rigorously, the principles and details of the division of the public property at the two epochs referred to, it will be seen, on taking a wide and lengthened survey, that great temporal blessings to a large from being crushed and massacred by the Turks, within these last twenty-five years, or as these same nations are now justified and authorized, by treaties, to stop the cruelties practised on the Africans, torn from their country to become slaves. In the name of all that is sacred, what are the hardships and distresses of the negroes, compared with the concentration of destitution and misery witnessed in Ireland? A state of matters exists there, far worse than the lowest condition of savage misery in any region of the earth!

Mr O'Connell addresses his book to Her Majesty, and endeavours to engage the sympathies of the royal female mind in aid of his most unhappy country. It is impossible to believe that Her Majesty can be aware of the real state and condition of so many millions of her subjects; and, in order to save her from the consequences and responsibilities, which this ignorance (presumed to exist) must shortly bring home to the government, it is to be hoped that she will put in execution her visit to Ireland, in the course of this summer, when circumstances may open her eyes to the spectacles of misery, the result of fiscal and Agrarian oppression of the worst kind.

People talk of the blood boiling with indignation on hearing of, or witnessing, any great outrage. On reading some of the extracts from the historians who have described the conquest and occupation of Ireland, and, above all, the accounts of the civil, military, judicial, and ecclesiastical atrocities committed in that country, a flush of the blood is felt every now and then to the head, which confirms the truth of the common expression quoted.

There are three facts or circumstances stated by Mr. O'Connell, which explain at a glance the extent of misery in Ireland, and as these are historical or statistical facts, there can be no question of their accuracy.

The *first*, goes back to the Conquest, under Henry II. The whole of Ireland was assigned over to ten English persons, who received from the grant the title to *all the lands* of that country—thus leaving the natives the alternative of being vassals, or perishing of hunger.

The *second*, in the present day, nine-tenths of the soil are held by *absentees*

The *third* follows as a consequence from the seizure and occupation of the soil in the manner described—*there are two millions three hundred thousand individuals dependent for subsistence on casual charity*!—that is to say, a third of the whole population in a state of destitution the most horrible

In truth, society in Ireland is now reduced to first principles, and man is

portion of mankind have resulted from the reformation of religion in the sixteenth century. Such a revolution can best be estimated, by general tendencies and grand results. In another section of this work, an attempt has been made to establish, that one object, very much overlooked, of the Christian dispensation, is to improve the condition of a people in their agrarian, fiscal, and economic arrangements;* but, strange to say, Christian legislators and rulers, though they acknowledge the authority of the Christian law over the thoughts and actions of the private citizen, will scarcely allow it to interfere with their deliberations in the senate, or their decisions in the cabinet. There is at least no formal avowal of any influence from that law, and, in legislative discussion, were an appeal made for support on the principles laid down by Moses or Jesus Christ, it is very probable that it would be met by sneers and ridicule. But, in spite of the intentions and designs of the men who happen to be the agents in carrying through a change in the circumstances of a country, experience has already proved, that the more freedom the Christian religion has to spread, apart from the corrupting influence of the civil and political power of

there struggling in a state of savage nature, produced by the cruel domination of England, hundreds of families are literally torn from the soil on which they have been reared, and expelled by physical force by the constabulary power; and bands of men, to the number of a thousand and upwards, armed with clubs or branches of trees, are rising, in the agony of distress and the energy of despair, to bid defiance to the civil and military forces of the government.

* This branch of the subject is omitted from this work, as being of too biblical a character, but probably it will appear afterwards in a separate publication, to illustrate and recommend the economics of the Mosaic and Christian laws to the fiscal and political circumstances of modern nations. No reason can be given why they should not be introduced into the legislature and cabinet of a country that professes itself Christian

a country, and when dissevered from all connection with the government, the deeper and stronger becomes its foundation, the more abundant become its temporal resources, and the greater good is extended to men by their possession of the means of subsistence, and by the institutions for education, and for the alleviation of the poverty, pain, and misery, which in the nature of things must afflict a certain class of the inhabitants of a country. In illustration of this, we must again go to America, where, in the contrast between the semibarbaric indolence, the spiritual darkness, and the arbitrary nature of the governments of the former colonies of Spain, and the vigorous, enlightened, and free republic of the United States—we have the materials for the instruction of the whole civilized world. These subjects are not touched upon in a party or sectarian spirit, and they are not influenced by temporary circumstances of disputes about boundaries, or of the insolvency of particular States and repudiation of public debts. These may be considered the accidents that happen to a nation, and are to be regretted for their immediate and future consequences.

Washington, and the other patriotic men who founded the American constitution, did not seize on the public lands wrested from Great Britain, to create immense estates for themselves and their political partisans, but they held them sacred for the use and benefit of the whole community, whereby every citizen found, in proportion to his means, a footing and a home on the soil of his country; and more than that, they held out to the industrious of all nations an asylum against oppression, and offered them, on just principles, lands on which to settle with their families.

It was declared as a fixed principle of the constitution, that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free use thereof;

or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press ; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and petition the government for a redress of grievances.”* Here it would appear that there was a perfect indifference in the government of the country to the establishment of the Christian, or any other religion whatever. Every thing was left to the conscience of the people, to choose their religion ; and to their liberality, to raise funds for its support ; and what has been the consequence ? The aggregate of all the States in the Union gives the following results :—

Population	.	.	13,000,000	} The year 1830 is taken.
Communicants	.	.	1,550,000	
Churches	.	.	12,580	
Ministers	.	.	11,450	

This gives about one church, and one minister to every 1,000 of the population ; results which, in proportion to circumstances, no other Christian country can present. Mr. Buckingham gives many details of this subject in his valuable work on the United States, and to it I am indebted for the above statement, and for what follows. Scotland is generally considered to be as well provided with religious instruction as any country, but it must in this respect yield to the United States.

	Population.	Churches.	Ministers.
3 Atlantic States have	3,871,194	— 4,229	— 3,587
All Scotland . .	2,365,800	— 1,804	— 1,765
3 Interior States	1,862,000	— 1,872	— 1,639

In 10 of the newest States lying to the Westward, there was a population of 3,641,000 ; churches, 3,701 ; ministers, 2,690.

In Scotland, there is one minister to every 1,312 of the population. In the three Atlantic States, and in the ten new

* American Constitution 1789.

ones, there is one minister to 917 and 984 persons, respectively. In the large cities there is a similar proportion in favour of America, comparing the following.

	Population.	Churches.	Ministers.
Liverpool . .	210,000	— 57 —	57
New York . .	280,000	— 132 —	142
Glasgow . .	220,000	— 74 —	76
Philadelphia .	200,000	— 93 —	127

The means afforded for education, are more ample in the United States than in any other country.

Out of the whole population, there are receiving education—1 in 5 in the States; 1 in 10 in Scotland; 1 in 12 in England; and 1 in 20 in Wales. There is not space here for details of the educational system established in that country; but to convey an idea of the extent and value of it, it may be mentioned, that in the single State of New York, with a population of about 2,000,000 souls, there is spent annually, in support of the common schools alone, about one million of dollars. In the other States, there is proportionally as much expended. This sum does not include the expense of private seminaries, or academies, for the higher branches of education. In fine, there is throughout the American union, an ample provision for the religious and moral education of every person, even to the poorest in the country; and any family, who has not every member of it able to read and write, and with books in its possession, has itself to blame. This is in a country where there is no national church!

But a church establishment, supported by the nation, would be a good thing, were results, such as described, to follow from it. But, how does the matter stand in this country? It is notorious, that an amount of funds is raised every year, sufficient to endow many national churches,

and yet about half the population are Dissenters, who support their own ministers. It also stands on record, that in certain parts of Yorkshire and Wales, within the island of Great Britain, there is a class of the population who never heard of Jesus Christ, or, if they have heard of him, cannot say who he was! It is perhaps reserved for England, out of all the countries in Europe, Asia, and America, to have some of its people in a state of such gross ignorance, as not to have heard a name that fills the universe!—Yet, there is an Archbishop of York, and a Bishop of Durham, who receive princely revenues from the very counties debased by such a state of things existent in it! If such ignorance as is described exist in this country, it is happiness to be ignorant of the fact; but the knowledge of it must spread, and the parties who allowed, or profited by, or connived at, this ignorance, must sink beneath the national scorn and contempt.

But the acts of the legislature of this country display a jealousy, and even dread, of the people becoming enlightened.*

The portion of North America formerly under the dominion of Great Britain is, since the separation of the countries, the only part of the globe where the great experiment is making of leaving man entirely to his own resources, and where no one individual, no family, no section of the community, step forward to claim a preference to the public lands of the country, and still less to the right of govern-

* There is in our system a blindness of intellect and an infatuation quite extraordinary in a country such as this, in affairs concerning the substantial comfort of the population. Our convicts entail on the country an enormous expense. Ignorance is at the root of all this. Were our legislators to apply arithmetic to such questions, they would find that the feeding, clothing, and safe custody, of half a dozen of criminals a year, will amount to about as much as the expense of educating four or five hundred children.

ing their countrymen. It is a most important experiment, in the success of which the whole human race is interested, and in the issue of which, the providence of the Almighty will be justified. But half a century is much too limited a period to test the experiment. The great enterprise must be carried through three or four generations of men, before experience shall have stamped its seal on it. But as far as the experiment has yet gone, we find a people, although unsettled in some things, in possession of a greater degree of personal, civil, and political liberty, than ever fell to the lot of mankind before; and we find the Christian religion, though unsupported by the State, flourishing and extending its influence; and we find throughout the wide extent of that country, no class of men, and scarcely an individual, who does not possess a sufficiency of bread.*

* "Christianity implies by one of its rites, too sacred to be particularized, that all the individuals of a Christian community should have at least a sufficiency of the first element of life."—From the MS. of *The Economics of the Mosaic and Christian Dispensations*, by the Author of this work.

CHAP. XII.

APPLICATION OF THE WHOLE ARGUMENT TO THE CONDITION OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

THE PRESENT STATE IS THE RESULT OF A LONG CONTINUANCE OF BAD LAWS,
AND NOT THE EFFECT OF TEMPORARY DERANGEMENT OF TRADE AND
FINANCE.—THE GREAT QUESTIONS AT ISSUE.

For three hundred and fifty years the sovereignty of these Islands has been successively exercised by the Tudors, the Stuarts, the Oranges, and the Guelphs; and it is to be ardently hoped by every lover of his country, that the People, the Sovereign, and the Aristocracy will, in their respective spheres of action, be guided by those great lessons which the history of nations, above all, which the history of their own nation, affords.

Each and all of these parties will require to prepare themselves for great changes in the circumstances of this country, and in the balance of its interests. The country will only deceive itself, and be eventually thrown into still greater confusion, if a belief be fostered that the derangement of affairs in every department of business and finance, which has existed for several years past, is merely of a temporary nature, and that the country only waits for a revival of trade and the opening of foreign markets, to recover its energies.

Unfortunately, many circumstances have united within the short space of three years, to produce a stagnation and derangement of trade in most of the main branches of the manufactures of the country : and as these are well known to every person connected with business, and are even obvious to superficial observers, people may imagine that these causes of distress will soon pass away, and matters resume their wonted activity. As soon as the partial cause of any particular distress shall be removed, it naturally may be expected that the distress will disappear at the same time. But the grand cause of the general distress is neither partial nor temporary. Palliative measures will only be like oil thrown on the heaving surges of the troubled ocean.

There is another delusion, which it will be well for the people to get quit of at this critical juncture of their affairs, and that is, the delusion of party politics, and the trusting to this administration, or the other administration, as the saviour of the country. The abuse of party and the vulgar recrimination between statesmen and public men, in and out of parliament, are thrown out merely to divert attention from the main objects of personal interest, contemplated by the fortunate adventurer of the day ; or to conceal from the public a secret understanding which may exist between the individuals who have retired from office, and those who have entered into it. Such have been the disclosures made of dereliction of principle by men of high rank and influence in the country, and such is the debasing effect of power on their character, that a person may believe anything of them in the present day. Among the mixed motives which sway the minds of two political men, a person may imagine that the desire to promote a relative to the bench in India, or to advance another to a diplomatic office, may stimulate the one to plot the ruin of an adminis-

tration, or the other to expose his country to danger in its foreign interests.

The indecent haste with which appointments to lucrative offices are made in favour of needy dependents of the minister, confirms this view of the moving springs of political changes. There is now an example of rapacity displayed on every change of government, sufficient to corrupt a whole people: and the shameless profligacy of one administration is unblushingly held forth by an organ of the party, as a precedent for the succeeding one, as will be perceived in such remarks as the following:—They (the Whigs) remained in place until they had multiplied precedents against themselves on points of prerogative, expenditure, inefficiency, and corrupt abuse of power and patronage, which must for ever shut their mouths as an opposition, whatever may be the fancied irregularities of any other government.”*

Such is the nature of the advocacy of a corrupt system of government for an enlightened people. The description is a correct one, of the irresponsible administrations which have existed one after the other, for the last hundred years in this country. The people have never been really represented in any of those administrations; and the two sections into which the dominant party is divided, have, in their exactions from the people, differed only in degree. These factions, that run the race of reckless expenditure, and for “the corrupt abuse of power and patronage,” are the progeny of a system, which contains in itself the principles that rouse a nation to reform itself—those principles of cupidity which are employed by the Ruler of all society, to stimulate a nation to free itself from fiscal bondage.

* Article on “the Prospects under the Peel Administration,” in Blackwood’s Magazine, for October 1841.

Calmly reviewing the history of nations that have passed through great revolutions, and comparing the state of their circumstances previous to the break-up of society, with the present condition of Great Britain in all its relations, the impression is forced on the mind, that a great change will inevitably take place in this country. The prospect in one sense is appalling, as the imagination at first throws dark colours on the picture; but as the genius of the British population is sedate, and their temperament cool, there need be little apprehension of violent outbreak, or extreme measures, either personal or proprietary. But, in straining the vision into futurity, the cheering reflection arises, that all the great organic changes which have taken place in this nation, have resulted in a greater degree of comfort and happiness to the mass of the people, and consequently the national power and prosperity have been increased. A revolution, in the ordinary sense of the term, is a change carried round and completed.

Men's minds ought to be prepared and made up on this great question, and the real matter at issue ought to be clearly defined and perfectly understood. The characteristic of all the changes and revolutions in this country, has been one of practical every-day business.—A matter-of-fact character is stamped on all the great events recorded in the history of the country. Order, silence, and earnestness in all public transactions, are observed wherever and whenever the objects are really worth the trouble and danger to be expended or encountered.

In oratorical assemblies, there are occasionally some noise and confusion, and of course a little personal heat; but from the House of Commons, during some great party question, such as a vote on the pension list—down to a vestry meeting, to levy a church-rate on Dissenters—there

are no flourishes attempted by the speakers on the honour and glory of the subject—but the questions are discussed on plausible grounds, showing how much religion is concerned in the one case; and in the other, how the credit of the government would suffer, and the delicacy of some dowager-pensioner be wounded, by inquiring into the date and motive of some snug allowance enjoyed perhaps in a suite of royal apartments, occasionally let by the pensioner at so many hundred pounds a year. In out-door meetings of the people, and at any great national or municipal spectacle, there is little excitability perceived; order and calmness prevail, and there is scarcely any circumstance that can be imagined, that would unbend the limbs of a vast multitude of British men, and cause them to whirl round in the mazes of the dance, like what took place in Paris, during the imposing ceremony of swearing to the constitution in 1790, and during the solemnity of the funeral procession of Napoleon, in the winter of 1840.* This difference in the

* “The national guard, during the hours which preceded the arrival of the procession, amused the spectators ‘d’une danse ronde,’ and with a thousand whimsical and playful evolutions, highly expressive of that gaiety which distinguishes the French character I believe, none but Frenchmen would have diverted themselves, and half a million of people, who were waiting in expectation of a scene the most solemn upon record, by circles of ten thousand men galloping ‘en danse ronde.’ . . . In an instant every sword was drawn, and every arm lifted up The King pronounced the oath, which the President of the National Assembly repeated, and the solemn words were re-echoed by 600,000 voices, while the Queen raised the Dauphin in her arms showing him to the people and the army.”
—*Letters of Helen Maria Williams*, 1790.

The weather in Paris, in December, 1840, was excessively cold, and the immense crowds of troops and civilians, while waiting for the grand funeral procession of Napoleon, began by stamping their feet to keep themselves warm, and ended by innumerable parties of waltzers and dancers. Napoleon himself truly said, that there was only “one step between the sublime and the ridiculous.”

disposition and habits of the English and French people, ought to be particularly remarked, as indicative of the diversity of their character.

The fantastic tricks played by the French at the beginning of their Revolution, have been deservedly held up to ridicule, and their excesses have been made political goblins and spectres, whereby to frighten the nation. But were the people of these Islands to be reduced to the utmost misery, and were starved by force of law, and, in the agony of self-preservation, to overturn the throne, and for a period spread anarchy around, still the institution of trial by jury would survive the shock, and give protection to life and property. It is highly honourable to the national character to state, that of all the institutions, laws, and customs of this country, that of trial by jury is almost the only one which has preserved its purity during a thousand years, and in the present day is as efficient for its purposes, as it ever was at any past period. This is the more remarkable, as it is an institution at times very obnoxious to power, and for the deterioration of which, several vigorous efforts have been made at various times. But its foundations rest on the integrity and the intelligence of the inhabitants of these islands, and neither power nor corruption has been able to overcome or destroy those qualities.

The questions at issue, in this country, are not matters of dispute between the people and the sovereign authority of the nation, but they are simply questions of a fiscal nature, on which the eternal principles of equity can be brought to bear, and to which arithmetical rules can be applied. The great question lies between the mass of the population and a section of it; and is reduced to—whether, in a national emergency, the dominant class of society, possessed of the greater part of the property of the country,

shall be made to contribute to the public expenses in proportion to the value of that property; or shall be allowed to continue to pay only in proportion as common citizens: thus evading their due share of the public burdens, which fall on the industry and labour of the great bulk of the people—thus compelled to pay for themselves, and also for the possessors of property, who make the laws, formed on unfair principles. If this outline of British legislation be correctly drawn—and of the truth of it, scarcely any one who has considered the subject will doubt—then it is manifest, that injustice pervades the system of our fiscal laws. But when, to the injustice of principle is added a weight of pressure unparalleled in ancient or modern times in any country, it will be perceived, that the two great causes, which have through all the world moved society from its equilibrium, exist in full strength in the British empire. These observations are not made in an inflammatory spirit, but are stated calmly, as the result of what may be called a philosophic survey of a few passages in the affairs of mankind, brought to bear on the concerns of this country.*

To the great French war, into which we plunged just fifty years ago, is to be traced a great part of the calamity which now overhangs, like a dark and thunder-charged cloud, the British nation. The horrors of that conflict are now matters of historical record, but its economic or fiscal consequences are felt by every poor man at present living here. The men who planned and conducted that war, and who held to the lips of the nation, the maddening draught to drown reflection, drew for the funds on the resources of a generation at that time unborn. On looking back to that

* The vast masses of the population now maintained and fed at the public expense in this country, present features fearfully assimilating to the condition of the Roman population, at the end of the Republic.

period of terrible excitement, from the present time of exhaustion caused by it, we awake as from a swoon, and wonder where are the fruits of so much expenditure, and the trophies of so many victories? We behold the nation, whose throat we grasped and thought we had subdued, now erect with renewed vigour, and rivalling us in commerce and navigation. This we ought to rejoice at; for it is better to have neighbours in good circumstances, prosperous and contented—than others, poor and restless, ever on the watch to encroach on territory not their own. But the galling circumstance in the present time, and that adds bitterness to the national distress, is to see those nations that we saved, at the cost of so much blood and treasure, now slamming their sea-ports in our face, and taunting us with being selfish and grasping monopolists. This truly is the severest cut of all; and yet the people of this country have themselves to blame in a great degree, by passively allowing the national counsels to be directed by a party, that neither represents the national intelligence, nor holds out the open hand of fellowship to the inhabitants of other nations.*

There was one man of splendid genius, who, by his eloquence in the senate, and by the power of his pen, contributed to fan the fatal enthusiasm of the party that led this country into the French revolutionary war. His work on the French Revolution has been the text-book for that

* It would appear, that there is some risk of the miserably-taxed people of this country, being called upon to pay the interest of a debt, guaranteed to establish a German lad on the throne of Greece, set up fifteen or twenty years since. There have been rumours of the insolvency and approaching bankruptcy of the government of that country; and, melancholy to relate, there was a deficiency of funds to furnish the royal residence of King Otho the First!

party, down to the present time. He was an advocate of great talents, but the most brilliant of them were of an imaginative character; and the sight of the defaced and fallen Corinthian capital of French society, struck his mind with horror, which coloured all his views and all his prospects of the great event. His nerves were too sensitive, or his taste too artificial, to permit him to perceive anything in the upheaving of a mighty nation, but nobility and priesthood "trodden down under the hoofs of a swinish multitude." But how short-sighted he was, of the grand results of the struggle, into which he was aiding to lead his country! Were he now to rise from his grave, and take a comparative glance at the national accounts of England and France, how he would be thereby astonished, on referring to what he wrote at the outbreak of the Revolution on the effects of national debts! He wrote in 1790: "Nations are wading deeper and deeper into an ocean of boundless debt. Public debts, which at first were a security to governments, by interesting many in the public tranquillity, are likely, in their excess, to become the means of their subversion. If governments provide for these debts by heavy impositions, they perish by becoming odious to the people. If they do not provide for them, they will be undone by the efforts of the most dangerous of all parties; I mean, an extensive discontented money-interest, injured, and not destroyed. The men who compose this interest, look for their security, in the first instance, to the fidelity of government—in the second, to its power. If they find the old government effete, worn out, and with their springs relaxed, so as not to be of sufficient vigour for their purposes, they may seek new ones that shall be possessed of more energy; and this energy will be derived, not from an acquisition

of resources, but from a contempt of justice. Revolutions are favourable to confiscation.”* That war cost £1,100,000,000, of which about the half remains a permanent debt on the country, and the interest of which is alone more than the whole expense of this nation at the time that Burke wrote these words: “It is with the greatest difficulty that I am able to separate policy from justice. Justice is itself the great standing policy of civil society; and any eminent departure from it, under any circumstances, lies under the suspicion of being no policy at all.”—The government that now rules the country, is the offspring of that which commenced the great war, and it will be reasonable that it should bear in mind the oracular announcement of one of the promoters of that war.

In addition to an amount of taxation unequalled in any country or age, made irritating by the partiality of its partition, is a system of laws, restricting the supply of food in the country. The councils of government are now employed in weighing grains of wheat and grains of barley, and calculating, in shillings and pence, how much a quarter ought to pay on entering this country, or how much it ought to be charged on being conveyed across the frontiers of Canada, from the fertile soil of New York, or of Ohio, and

* “Reflections on the French Revolution,” by Edmund Burke. The following remarks of Burke deserve notice at this time: “It is not any fear of the confiscation of our church-property, from this example in France, that I dread, though I think this would be no trifling evil. The great source of my solicitude is, lest it should ever be considered in England as the policy of a state to seek a resource in confiscation of any kind; or that any one description of citizens should be brought to regard any of the others as their proper prey.” The Church of England property was all acquired by one act of confiscation; and whatever may be the policy of the governing party in this country, their practice is to “have a resource in confiscation,” by having the property of the mass of the citizens as “their proper prey.”

then to be doled out to the famishing people of the British islands. Now, let the high and noble of the land mark this well, and let the entire bench of bishops confirm the unholy tax, laid on with the vain expectation of its being able to neutralize a law of society. The attempt is futile. The nation remonstrates against this tax—it protests against the ignoble and paltry imposition of a small piece of silver on an article of necessary food.

But in the successful resistance to this tax, the consequences are immeasurably more important to this nation, and to the whole civilized world, than would appear from the mere saving of a minute fraction of money on a pound of bread. Great things are involved in the issue.

In the first place, there will be the triumph of justice over the most cruel fiscal despotism that ever cramped the energies of a great nation; then will follow liberty of commerce, by the downfall of barriers which had been raised in order to throw into the hands of a few what belonged to the million. An impetus will be given by the event, and a forward march taken by the British people, who want only to be freed from trammels, to accomplish whatever they deliberately plan for their own improvement. Commercial freedom will increase and strengthen political liberty and political power; and the inhabitants of other countries will give their sympathies, and be glad to accept a fair exchange of trading advantages. Mutual interest is the grand bond of nations, as of individuals.

But there is a blindness and an infatuation in the possessors of power which may operate violently in opposition, and the inflammable matter may be compressed the deeper into the fabric of society by the superincumbent weight. In this case, time and events will again add to the history of mankind another convulsion, to sweep the earth.

Beginning with Christianity the greatest of all revolutions, Europe and America are indebted for their liberty and civilization to a series of revolutions originating in resistance to harsh or unjust taxation.

The Author of Christianity paid under protest, or with a reserve, the tax of half a shekel to the sanctuary.* A

* "And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute-money came to Peter and said, Doth not your Master pay tribute? He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? Of their own children, or of strangers? Peter saith unto him, Of Strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first comes up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money; that take, and give unto them for me and thee."

There is in the miracle performed on this occasion, something quite different from all the other miracles done by Christ, as we have here exhibited a supernatural power to obtain a small piece of money. The means employed were out of all proportion to the end accomplished. As the receiver of the tribute first applied to Peter, whom Jesus "prevented" from paying, it would appear from the expression, that Peter really had money sufficient to satisfy the demand. It is therefore to be inferred that there is more in the transaction than meets the eye, and the miracle was performed to attract attention to it. In the marginal notes to Bagster's Comprehensive Bible, the word "tribute" in the text is explained by "Didrachma," a Greek coin of the value of 1s. 3d sterling, or half a shekel, which appears to have been the poll-tax paid by every male adult among the Jews to the Sanctuary.

And the words "a piece of money" are translated a "stater, or half an ounce of silver, in value 2s. 6d." It thus appears that the money found in the mouth of the fish was the sum required for the tax of two persons. Now this tax was originally imposed by Moses for an offering to the Lord, "to make an atonement for your souls." But the necessity for this tax did not exist in the case of the Author of Christianity, and he merely gave the money, "lest he should offend them" by the refusal to pay. He paid the tax on reasons of expediency, or with protest; and the lesson to be derived by nations from the circumstance is this. That a fiscal, or any other law, ought to be abrogated, as soon as the circumstances which gave rise to it

thousand years later, the tax of a bezant roused all Europe to pour forth its population to avenge oppression. The taxes and plunderings of King John of England produced the charter of liberty. An illegal tax of four ounces of silver stirred the English people to arms, to expel their king, and change the succession to the throne. An imposition of a tax of a small piece of copper on an article of food, drove the Americans into a rebellion which terminated in their independence. Oppressive taxation, long continued, excited the French nation to an inhuman energy of revolution. Spain is decaying under a fiscal system which dries up the sources of national wealth, and futurity has yet to unfold what shall result from the efforts of the British nation to free itself from an intolerable load and distribution of taxation; and the tax of a few shillings on a quarter of wheat, will yet rouse society over the habitable globe.

have ceased to operate. The British statute-book contains many laws of such a nature, and, on this principle, the law of septennial parliaments is not binding on the consciences of the citizens of Great Britain and Ireland, as it was passed in order to concentrate the power of the country to suppress a rebellion more than 120 years ago, but has been retained in order to consolidate a fiscal power greater than ever weighed down a nation.—From the MS. of *The Economics of the Mosaic and Christian Dispensations*, by the Author.

CHAP. XIII.

THE GREAT REVOLUTION.

THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY INTO EUROPE, IN A CORN-LADEN
VESSEL.

THEOLOGICALS and historians have recognized in the establishment and extension of great empires for the blessing or curse of mankind, the hand of an overruling Providence ; and certain it is that a comprehensive view of sacred and profane history confirms the truth of the opinions entertained on this subject. It appears that great results in the affairs of mankind have been brought about only by means of governments resting on the resources of vast masses of population, and, according to the wisdom, justice, and humanity—or barbarism, tyranny, and cruelty—displayed, has been the happiness or the misery of the people subject to those governments. In the prophetic books of the Bible are to be seen frequent denouncements of calamities and destruction on nations for their crimes ; and, on the other hand, there are predictions of prosperity, happiness, and power, to nations in carrying forward beneficent designs.

Without fixing attention on the great empires which preceded the establishment of the Roman dominion, it will only be necessary to refer to the widely extended power of the Romans, as a signally marked instance in the history of

the world of a great civilizing influence in existence at a period when it pleased the Deity to reveal to mankind a knowledge of his will, and it will be perceived that that empire afforded the facility of spreading the knowledge of the Christian religion.

In the itineraries, or narratives of the proceedings of the Apostles, are to be found the accounts of the facilities which the vessels employed in the free commerce carried on, afforded to those holy men in their voyages from port to port, in Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy, and perhaps to Spain, and even to the British islands. So frequent, indeed, was the commercial intercourse between the various ports on the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea, that Saint Paul and his companions, in their missions appeared to have found no difficulty in getting conveyance from place to place whenever wanted. There are some remarkable circumstances connected with his memorable voyage to Rome, to make his appeal to Cæsar, and to hold communion with the Christians already established in that city. He sailed in a vessel belonging to Adramyttium, from Cesarea to Myra, a port of Asia Minor, about midway between the islands of Cyprus and Crete, and at Myra he took his passage in an Alexandrian vessel bound for Italy; and, what will appear very striking to those who view the prohibition by the laws of this country, of a foreign trade in corn as anti-Christian, is the fact, that the cargo of the ship in which the great Apostle embarked, CONSISTED OF WHEAT. The incidents of that miraculous voyage, are well known; and what will give an idea of the many opportunities of voyaging by trading-vessels at that period, is to perceive that Saint Paul found in the creek or harbour, where he was wrecked, another vessel of Alexandria lying weather-bound on her passage to a port in Italy; and, in that good ship

called the "*Castor and Pollux*," the Apostle continued his voyage. As this vessel was from Alexandria, it is very probable that her freight consisted of corn for the Italian market.

When Christians in this country reflect on the history and character of the illustrious personage carrying a message from God to the dark heathen world, and taking his passage in a corn-laden ship, they will be struck with devout admiration of the providence of the Almighty. Let them reflect on the eternal importance of that voyage performed by the grand missionary of Christianity. Let them meditate on the influence of the writings of that holy man, who probably composed, in the very ship which conveyed him, some of those inspired works that carry hope and consolation to millions who groan under cruel laws made by selfish governments. Let them, at the present time, devoutly reflect on all the circumstances of that memorable voyage, and they will perceive that a degree of sanctity has been imparted to a trade so highly distinguished. Indeed, there is a very holiness in the flag that floats over a corn-laden ship: it is like the olive-branch between nations, for, of all the benign and civilizing influences of commerce, the warm and kindly feelings with which a famishing people give welcome to the men who bring from another nation supplies of food, and the gratification experienced by the latter in being the bearers of relief to their fellow-creatures, must be the most beneficial. Such a commerce has in it the quality of mercy: "it blesseth him that gives, and him that takes."

It will take long, however, before such considerations as these touch the sordid spirit of corn-law monopoly. But there is a good spirit and an enlightened mind in the vast mass of the British people, who have only to exert them, to frown

into silence those in favour of barbarous and antiquated systems. It would be well for Christians of all denominations to bring their opinions to favour the utmost freedom of commerce, on higher and holier grounds than those on which the question generally rests.

In these latter ages it is manifest that the British empire has exercised an influence and wielded a power as great, and in some respects greater, than the Roman empire of old; and were the activity, the enterprise, and intelligence of its people freed from the trammels of prohibitive laws, and allowed to act upon a government really, and not nominally, resting on the people, there is a vision of power and glory in prospect for them brighter and more enduring than anything which history has yet exhibited to mankind. The mantle of the Roman dominion fell on the British Islands, so far as respects the wide extent of their empire over the globe, and the nations which have sprung from them; but Christianity and science have imparted a moral and physical power exceeding, out of all calculation, that which the Romans possessed. The Divine Author of Christianity, in rebuking the Jews for their cruelties and unbelief, declared—"Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." WHAT NATION is to be thus distinguished?

[This chapter appeared first in the columns of the "City Chronicle and Commercial Advertiser" of 14th September 1841; and the author again publishes it, as its subject is suited to the nature of this work—the rest of which is quite original.]

BOOK II.

THE ORIGIN, PROGRESS, AND CONSOLIDATION OF THE BRITISH ARISTOCRATIC POWER.

CHAP. I.

THE FOOD OF THE PEOPLE FORMS THE BASIS OF THE BRITISH ARISTOCRATIC POWER.

THE STATE OF THE CASE, AS ILLUSTRATED BY THE PROVISION LAWS—THE ARGUMENT DOES NOT ENCROACH UPON THE PREROGATIVES OF THE SOVEREIGN—NOR TOUCH THE PRINCIPLE OF THE DIVISION OF THE LEGISLATIVE POWER IN THE COUNTRY.—HISTORICAL SKETCH AND COMPARISON OF FISCAL EPOCHS.

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THE struggles which, in the present year, 1842, are carried on by the British people, to free themselves from the restriction on their food, and to recover the exercise of their industry, depressed by the governing aristocratic party, are practical commentaries on the doctrine, that the control of subsistence constitutes political power. The British empire has been actually convulsed, and the people are waiting the issue of events which are to decide its fate. Unjust laws, and the galling load of unequal taxation, long persevered in, are now producing the usual consequences of discontent and heart-burnings among the people, and a patient but firm resolution to get those laws abrogated. Manufactures and commerce have been paralyzed, and are

on the decline, under the operation of these impolitic regulations. The dense population of the manufacturing towns is thrown out of employment, and poverty and destitution, from Paisley to Windsor, overspread the country.*

The alternate prohibition, and the heavy taxation, of food, imported into this country under the provision-laws, stand out in bold relief as cases of cruelty and barbarism, almost without parallel in the history of any people. And, as they will most assuredly become soon matters of by-gone history, it is proper to preserve an outline of a system formed to check the industry and cramp the progress of the people of a great nation, inhabiting an insular territory. The framers of these laws are not accused of the diabolical intention of throwing this country into the horrors of revolution, by the outbreak of a starving population; but they must be reminded, that the consequences of locking up in the public granaries of this kingdom, large heaps of foreign corn, of which the law prohibits the despatch to a people without work and without food, may be as dreadful as the anarchy contemplated by Cataline in ancient Rome, or as the destructive violence practised by the population of Paris, roused to fury by the artificial famine caused by Philip d'Orleans.

* The condition of the population in the manufacturing districts, is a matter of too melancholy a notoriety to require description; but in the town which surrounds the favourite abode of the sovereign of these realms, there appears to be an amount of destitution which contrasts strikingly with the luxury which dwells in the palace. On the occasion of the christening of the heir-apparent to the throne, there was a distribution of food and fuel made to the inhabitants of Windsor, and out of a population of about 10,000 souls, there were upwards of 4,000 applicants for the royal bounty. This state of society assimilates to that in Eastern countries, where the monarch lives enthroned amidst a nation of helpless paupers.—See Morning Herald newspaper of December 11, 1841.

Perhaps mankind may outgrow the practice of forming laws to restrict in any way the operations of commerce, and learn to confine the attention of governments to simple police-protection to persons and property.

But as it will be long before such a system will become common, we must be content to get the most obnoxious parts of restriction first done away with.

There is a reason founded in humanity for a prohibition, under peculiar circumstances of a people, of the exportation from a country of bread-corn and other articles of food: and there is also one, for a premium, or bounty, on the introduction of articles of food into a country, the population of which is overgrowing the internal means of subsistence. We may imagine even the United States of America, with all their resources—becoming straitened in home-supplies, either from a failure of crops, or from an extraordinary influx of strangers driven from Europe by wars and civil broils—compelled for a time to prohibit the export of wheat, flour, and other grain. And we see that the Chinese, a wise and provident people, allow a large bounty on the importation of rice into their country. Every foreign vessel that enters the port of Canton, takes a large proportion of her cargo in rice, in order to secure a reduction of the port-dues. China is a remarkable country, and is cultivated to the highest state of perfection attainable by such a people: so valuable is the land, that even hedges are avoided as boundaries of fields, and yet the government encourages by a bounty the importation of the kind of grain preferred by the inhabitants! The government of China, however, is not an aristocratic one, but it is a pure despotism, under a monarch who, by the law, and by the habits and opinions of the people, is considered in the relation of a father to his family, and with paternal feelings

adopts every means to secure full feeding for his children. He of course exercises his authority when necessary, and, in the consistency of his character, applies the bamboo to his subjects, analogous to the whipping given to naughty children.

These regulations of prohibition of export, and of bounty on the import, of corn, are plain and intelligible. But laws of prohibition or restriction on the importation of food, into a country with a population supposed to be redundant, and this redundancy shipped off year after year, at an enormous expense, to every wilderness in America, Africa, and Australia, form anomalies in human conduct, that, to an inhabitant of the moon, or other ex-terrestrial region, must appear perfectly inexplicable. But when this lunar observer discovers that a considerable portion of the male adult population is actually in the condition of paupers maintained at the public expense, that the great bulk of the population are complaining of want of trade, in consequence of not being allowed to import their food, that they cannot get enough of food at home, and, in fine, that poverty, recklessness, and contempt for the law, are spreading through the country—and all this while the governing part of the population are revelling in abundance, competing in extravagance, and rioting in every luxury—he must come to the conclusion that mental blindness has seized the rulers of such a country, or that hearts of demons have usurped their breasts.

But it will not do to form any such conclusions. He must know, that these laws are for the encouragement of agriculture! but unless he come down to the earth, it is impossible to explain to him how it happens that the grand result of these laws is such wide-spread misery among the inhabitants of the country. Another reason given for these

laws is, to make us independent of all foreign nations for such an indispensable article as bread-corn. He would presume from this, that the people wanted to get all their corn from abroad, and to stop altogether the cultivation of the lands at home ; but this is quite a mistake, as every person wishes to see as much food in the country as it is possible, whether raised in or out of it. For almost every other article essential to our manufacturing, commercial, and naval greatness,* we are dependent on foreigners, and there is a principle in human nature which makes reciprocal interest the great bond of nations. He must know also, that the authors of these laws maintain that they are necessary for our safety in case of war : but this is an argument which displays moral cowardice in its supporters, foreign to the character of the British people ; for even their greatest enemies must admit that they are not a people that shrink from dangers, either present or remote, but coolly and bravely meet them, prepared for the issue whatever it may be. There is something so self-tormenting in this pusillanimous conduct of placing a country, in times of profound peace, and with prospects of their permanency, in a condition preparing for war, as to approach to the idiosyncrasy of a miser, trembling under fear of starvation with the abundance of every thing at his command. Dreadful would be the fate of this country, were its destinies in the hands of a party actuated by such a sordid and pusillanimous disposition during the dangers of a foreign war, or of an invasion of the native soil.

The laws prohibiting, or imposing heavy duties on the importation of animal and vegetable food into the British

* Even the very ropes, cordage, and sails of our ships of war, are manufactured by us of materials received from a country under a powerful and despotic monarch, who may become our most formidable enemy.

Islands, are of a comparatively modern date. The party that enacted them must have derived its mighty power from some source antecedent to these laws, and it will therefore be necessary to go to the origin of this fiscal political power, and to trace its progress.

This is not a question that touches or encroaches upon the executive power of the sovereign, or his prerogatives. For the support of the executive authority, and for the maintenance of the institutions of the country, a certain amount of revenue is required; and, in one point of view, it is apparently indifferent to the monarch, from what source the funds are derived, and in what way they are collected. The arrangement of these points is left entirely to the parties who are to pay the amount; or, in theory, it is supposed that they are left. At all events, the sovereign does not directly interfere in the business, but he demands of his subjects to settle among themselves in what manner, and within what time, a given amount shall be paid into the treasury. It is manifestly for the interest of the sovereign, and for his security and happiness, that his people should be prosperous and happy: but the great misfortune of the prince is, that he cannot see with his own eyes, or hear with his own ears, what is going on beyond the precincts of his palace, or his accustomed haunts; and as he is the grand umpire in the disputes of parties and factions in the country, he is continually surrounded by persons who have a strong interest, or bias, in favour of measures represented for the general good, though perhaps really meant for the advantage of a small section of the population, and that, perhaps, the most wealthy and powerful part of it.

It is considered proper to make these observations, before proceeding farther, in order at once to prevent any impression being made of a design to sap the foundations of the

monarchy. It can be demonstrated from the whole tendency of British history, that the throne, resting on constitutional principles, has been the safeguard of the liberties of the people against the efforts of the aristocratic power to crush them;* and the people may rest assured, that, were the throne overturned, and an elective executive magistrate with the name of president, protector, or any other, raised in its place, this country would become the scene of fierce struggles among a score of powerful men for the possession of the government, and intrigue and corruption would alternate with violence and civil war, through the length and breadth of the land.

From historical evidence, and on conviction, the people ought therefore to look up to the throne as the palladium of their freedom: and, independent of this attachment to constitutional monarchy, there are, in the sovereign who now reigns, circumstances which strongly engage the affections, and strengthen the loyalty, of her subjects. Without enumerating these particular circumstances, it will be necessary only to say that Queen Victoria, by her presence of mind, her calmness in danger, and her consideration for the safety of other persons, has drawn towards her the sympathies of a manly people.

While it is acknowledged that the throne is the barrier that stands between the people and the ambitious aristocratic faction; on the other hand, it is maintained that the sovereign, who takes a proper view of his position, will

* The increase of popular power in the form of trading guilds and corporations, was from the encouragement of the crown, as a counterpoise to the power of the aristocracy. But the exclusive or aristocratic principle entered into those very corporations, which in the course of time, and from the altered circumstances of the people, became the very hot-beds of corruption.

find in the people the truest friends and the firmest supporters.

In order to guard against misconception of the design of these observations, it may be well also to state decidedly, that the object contemplated, is to free the great body of the people from the invasion of the aristocratic party, and to restore them to their just rights; and not to destroy the legitimate influence of the constitutional higher branch of the legislative body. It is essential to the preservation of the liberties of the people, that the legislative or deliberative assembly be divided into two independent branches, for the purpose of a mutual check on each other, and to prevent haste and carelessness in the formation of laws. Countries with the legislative power in the possession of one body of men, have quickly fallen into the worst species of despotism—that which is covered with a guise of liberty, to deceive to ruin. The Roman people, with all their passion for freedom, and with all their energy, could not stand against the senate. Their tribunes were more properly their attorneys or leaders, than their representatives, in the modern meaning of the word. The liberties of the English people were rapidly giving way, during the time of the one-sided legislation of Cromwell. Scotland had its legislature in one assembly, composed of lords and commons. Its history is filled with deeds of violence done by the aristocratic power, and it shows an almost uninterrupted struggle between the king and the nobles for the government of the country. The Venetians fell under one of the most terrible despotisms that ever crushed a people, by the legislative and executive power being engrossed by one senatorial body.

The North American provinces, where there exists the most perfect state of democracy, have their legislative body

divided into two chambers. The French since their revolution have adopted the same plan. In fine, a division of the legislative faculty into two deliberative assemblies, with a veto on their proceedings by the executive authority, is really essential to the existence of the liberties of a people.* Therefore let King, Lords, and Commons, as established by the theory of the constitution, continue to form the government of the country. But in the election of the peers, the principle adopted for the cases of Scotland and Ireland, would appear to be more agreeable to the law of common sense, than the hereditary principle as established in England. Should extra-constitutional force ever be applied in this country, it is probable that the elective principle will be at once introduced into the senate, the same as in the popular branch of the legislature.

But in the mean while, every effort will require to be made by the people to get their subsistence freed from the clutches of the landed aristocratic power; and unless that be done, the exclamation may be made—"Fear not; England has a sufficiency for twelve millions of inhabitants—all the rest must perish, and then there will be no scarcity of bread!"

As it is for the preservation of the liberties of the people, that the legislative body should be divided into two independent sections, and that the sovereign should possess the power of controlling both, by means of a veto on their proceedings—so, also, it is for the safety of the sovereign, that

* The instinct of mankind in these matters, leads to a division of the legislative power. We perceive this through the whole of that part of America formerly colonies of Spain. In the schedules of the laws of those republics from Chile to Texas, we find the following principle laid down — "The legislative power shall reside in a Chamber of Deputies and in a Senate, which shall compose the General Congress."

the upper branch, or aristocratic power, do not domineer over the great mass of his subjects. This usurped power, either in the form of direct privileges, or immunities at the expense of the body of the people, or through a secret influence by corrupt practices, is sure to operate to the disadvantage of the sovereign. The fact is, the sovereign is made the tool of the dominant faction, without his being aware of it; and he incurs the odium of measures, from which he really derives no benefit, but for which he takes upon himself a heavy responsibility. The sovereign is the most prominent person in the state, and, in times of convulsion, is the first who is assailed.

The fate of Louis XVI., of France, will illustrate the case of a patriotic and benign monarch, having been mistaken for the author of miseries, which resulted from the long-continued acts of a selfish and corrupt Aristocracy.

The power wielded by an oligarchy can be disguised in such a manner, as not to be perceived till the blow actually falls on the victims—but the power, however great, of one individual, whether under the title of emperor, king, doge, or president, can be limited by law or custom, and his duties and prerogatives, even to matters of etiquette, can be defined with perfect precision. In constitutional governments, the great personal power of the sovereign is tempered by the responsibility that attaches to the ministers and secretaries, whom the sovereign is bound to employ.

In Great Britain, the most ambitious and unprincipled minister would not dare to commit the sovereign to any acts which clearly were a breach of the law, that fixed and defined his power and prerogatives under the constitution; nor would he cause the House of Commons to set aside the rules, which a long course of precedents had established for its practice in the routine of legislation. But the same

minister will perhaps introduce to his sovereign, a House of Commons, as the representatives of the people, that he knows, from his own experience of election-proceedings, has been assembled under circumstances of such corruption, and such "Judas-like bribery," as to shock the moral feelings of the people; and even to equal in profligacy the most corrupt practices of the Roman Aristocracy in the last days of the Roman constitution. And yet this minister, who commits a species of treason to his sovereign, by taking advantage of her youth and inexperience, and trusting to the generosity of her character, has the power of controlling the subsistence, and of trenching on the liberties, of every individual in the British dominions!

The history of the aristocratic power in Great Britain, down to the present times, is a department of national history of the utmost importance to the people of this country.

For several centuries after the conquest in the year 1066, the inhabitants of England were divided into two classes only, namely, masters and slaves; and the following account of the state of Europe about that period, will apply to the British Islands: "Fierceness, violence, and rapine prevailed in the absence of social order and morals. Private war desolated Europe; the nobles were robbers, and most castles were but dens of thieves and receptacles of plunder. Churchmen, as well as laymen, held their estates by return of military service."* But churchmen did not like to shed blood; hence the use by them of clubs in battle, and afterwards of fire to consume heretics!—the tender mercies of the men of God!

"The villains and slaves were out of the jurisdiction of courts of justice—they had no rights, no possessions, but

* Mill's Hist. of the Crusades, vol 1. p. 30.

were in every respect considered as cattle. If any person should harbour the villains of another lord, and refuse to render them, the injured lord ought forcibly to enter the lands of the wrong-doer, and seize the villain. If any male villain married a female villain without consent of her lord, the lord of the male villain was compelled to give to the other lord a villain of equal age with her who had been married; but if the parties had been united with the consent of the lord of the female villain, then no return could be demanded.* These were the laws as practised in Palestine by the military chiefs, on their serfs and followers; and such were the laws, with very little difference, in England about the same period. It is singular that it did not occur to the military churchmen of the Crusades, to retain possession of the Holy Land by partially following the example of Moses, and giving the "villains" some interest in the country, in the shape of small allotments of land: but very few of these club-armed priests were able to read, and, perhaps, all that they knew of the laws of Moses, was the regulation for the tithes of the produce of land.

The villains were, however, mere slavish instruments in the hands of the lay or clerical military chiefs, and were fed for their services, on the principle of feeding the oxen for the sake of the field required to be cultivated.

As late as towards the end of the fifteenth century, the celebrated Earl of Warwick, known in English history as the "*King-maker*," maintained, it is said, no less than 30,000 men at his tables, in his different castles. This fact at once explains the secret of his power of king-making, for, by withholding for one day the food from his followers, he was sure of getting them to do, the day following, whatever he wanted them to do. In those days of barbarous

* Mill's Hist. of the Crusades.

aristocratic power, the slavish followers would dethrone their sovereign, to gratify the man who fed them. What is to be admired in the history of the Earl of Warwick, is, that he possessed the self-denial of refraining from putting the crown upon his own head.

When great numbers of slaves have contrived to emancipate themselves, and endeavoured to improve their own condition, and to raise their fellows from bondage, society assumes another aspect, and political parties begin to move and agitate the affairs of the country. These political parties assume or receive distinctive names. It is only within these last two hundred years, that the history of this country has presented features of marked interest for the great body of the people. Even during the reign of Elizabeth, an epoch glorious in English history, the people were of little consideration, if we may judge by the passive character of their representatives in parliament, where the liberty of speech consisted merely of the words "Ay" or "No," to the edicts presented by the sovereign. But it must be borne in mind, that the people were of no political consequence, and they were also kept down by monopolies, which only wanted the article "bread" to fill up the list of everything of necessary use. The monopoly of bread in favour of a party was reserved to the nineteenth century.

However, as regarded the revenue for the expenses of government, the industry of the people was comparatively free, down to the breaking out of the civil war, as the public revenue was raised chiefly by a land-tax, a tax on property in different shapes, and duties on merchandise. The illegal system of taxation of Charles the First brought matters to an issue in the country.

As the civil war threw business of all kinds out of course. the revenue raised, by the popular party, for its support

were from irregular sources—part from monthly assessments on landed and personal property; from the customs; from the excise on domestic productions; from weekly collections of provisions for the soldiers; and from the sale of church, crown, and other property.*

When the excise duties were first put on by authority of parliament, to carry on the war against the King and Aristocracy, they were considered extremely odious by the people, who only submitted to them on account of the necessity of the case, and with the understanding that they were to be kept on only during the continuance of that necessity. But it is to be particularly remarked, that the parliament, on the restoration of Charles II., confirmed this most obnoxious tax on the consumption of the people; and hence the origin of the present system of taxation of food, and every article of comfort required by the industrious portion of the population of Great Britain and Ireland. The bit was inserted by the corrupt and subservient House of Commons, to gratify the monarch restored to the throne; and the aristocratic party, ever since, has by it curbed the people, and thrown from their own lands and property, burdens which must *now* be replaced. Under the first excise law, the taxes on land still amounted to about a fourth of the whole expenditure of the government; although that was a proportion much under what land ought to have contributed to the expenses of the State.

During the reign of that wretched king, James II., the landed aristocratic power voted an annual revenue of upwards of two millions sterling, *without* including any tax at all upon land. But William III. who succeeded to the abdicated throne of James, passed, in the year 1692, the

* The most singular tax was that of one meal a day, imposed on the inhabitants of London, during the administration of Cromwell.

famous land-tax law, of twenty per cent. on the rental of land and houses, six per cent. on personal property, and twenty per cent on pensions. During the reign of William, more than a fourth of the public revenue was raised from land-tax. At that time the whole revenue was about £4,600,000, of which the tax on land was about £1,300,000.

In the year 1842, the total amount of revenue is £52,000,000, of which the taxes on land amount to less than £1,200,000.*

Before proceeding farther, a pause must be made here, to consider this statement. There is a great depth of meaning in it. Land and fixed property in a country, are the objects for the protection of which government is chiefly instituted, and on them, as the legitimate basis, the great burden of taxation rests. Among all nations, ancient and modern, such has been the case. In ancient Egypt a land-tax of twenty in the hundred was levied by the government. Moses, by the command of God, imposed a land-tax of the same amount for the maintenance of the religious, civil, and military institutions of the Jews. The ancient Romans established a tax of ten in the hundred on the produce of agriculture, and of twenty in the hundred on vineyards and gardens. In the British empire in India about two-thirds of the public revenue are raised from the produce of the lands. By the constitutional law of England, down to the Revolution of 1688, land bore the principal burdens of the State: indeed, the lands were assigned to the proprietors by

* On corn, malt, sugar, tea, coffee, butter, cheese, and other articles of food consumed by the people, £16,000,000; on British spirits £5,400,000; on Foreign spirits £2,600,000; on wine £1,840,000. Can any human being be surprised at the enormous accumulation of property in the hands of the law-making class, and at the poverty of the industrious classes, after considering the effect of such a system continued through two or three generations.

the conqueror, on the express condition of bearing the expense of government either by personal service, or by substitution of payment of taxes. In the modern nations of Europe the great portion of the public expenses of government is defrayed from land-taxes: taking the most powerful nations we have,

	Land and property tax.	Other taxes.
In France . . .	£23,200,000 —	£17,500,000
Prussia . . .	3,990,000 —	3,667,000
Austria . . .	8,795,000 —	7,700,000

But in Great Britain, the most wealthy of all European nations, we have land-taxes £1,200,000 other taxes £51,000,000 !

Let the 27,000,000 of men, women, and children, in the islands of Great Britain and Ireland, rivet their attention on these statements, and inquire why should such inequality exist? The £51,000,000 are made up of

Taxes on food, drinkables, and on articles of raw material,	£39,000,000
Duties on transfer of property, <i>not lands</i> , and taxes on industry and on prudence—stamps on mercantile transactions,	7,000,000
Taxes on windows of houses—Post Office—Duties on horses, carriages, servants; and other assessed taxes,	5,000,000
Total,	£51,000,000

The landed Aristocracy, that make the laws for this great manufacturing and commercial nation, tax themselves to the amount of only about two and one-third per cent. of the national burdens; while they tear from the subsistence, or tax the industry of the people, to the amount of ninety-

seven and two-thirds per cent! Scarcely one person out of a hundred is aware of the real state of the case, and hence the apathy of the people. This is a question of the greatest personal interest to every individual, however humble, in the United Kingdom, and it is of vast importance to the farming, manufacturing, commercial, shipping, banking, and every other interest in the country.

How does it happen, that each and all of these interests are successively, or almost at times simultaneously, in a state of depression and apparent decay? And how comes it that the landed interest, or, in other words, the few hundred families that form the legislature, flourish amid the universal distress, and year after year, and generation after generation, become richer in lands, houses, and stock, as the property of the other classes diminishes, and the labour of the poor man, by all his efforts, cannot supply him with food?

It will be again said, by the supporters of the present system, that the legislators are not exempted from the operation of their own laws, and, as consumers, are subject to the same duties on their corn, sugar, and beer, as the poor artisans of Manchester or Paisley, or as the miserable agricultural labourer on his 7s. to 10s. a week! But it is really mockery to justify our fiscal laws, by pleading the liability of their makers to these laws. The class of men who are the law-makers are few in number, but of great value as proprietors; they tax themselves as consumers, but, from the smallness of their numbers, contribute little to the revenue; and they keep their property, which would give a great deal, free from all burdens.

We have to look to this source for the cause of the distresses of the country. Common sense will at once teach men, that when consumption is thus severely taxed for a

long period of years, and property allowed to remain scathless, labourers toil in vain, and sink in a struggle with famine and disease, and the fruits of industry, which at first accumulated into capital, at length disappear from the possessors. When to the enormous load of taxation on consumption, is to be added the still larger amount indirectly abstracted, through means of monopolies of bread, corn, and other provisions, the wonder is, that the British people have not, long ere this, sunk under the effects of such a spoliatory system. No other race of people could have survived it so long.

CHAP. II.

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE BRITISH ARISTOCRATIC POWER, FROM THE OUTBREAK OF THE CIVIL WAR IN 1642.

THE EFFECTS OF THE DYNASTIC CHANGES IN GREAT BRITAIN—INCREASE OF THE ARISTOCRATIC POWER THEREFROM—THE CLIMAX AND CONSOLIDATION OF IT UNDER GEORGE THE THIRD—THE GREAT WAR—THE GRAND RESULTS ARE DEBT, TAXATION, AND NATIONAL DECREPIDITUDE—THE MONOMANIASM OF THE CORN-LAWS.

DYNASTIC changes in a country have always a powerful influence over its circumstances, and in Great Britain, although the monarchical principle has been through all its history ever active, there have been as frequent moves in the reigning family, or its branches, as in most other countries. But, for these changes it is not requisite to go farther back than two hundred years. In the year 1642, Charles the First committed an act of personal despotism by entering the House of Commons, and demanding the instant imprisonment of Hampden, Pym, and three other persons, who had been the most active in resisting the payment of the taxes illegally imposed. This act was considered an attack on the people, and the country was at once thrown into the flames of civil war, carried on between the parliamentary army and the forces raised by the adherents of Charles.

The year 1652 saw England under a Commonwealth, which lasted till the death of Cromwell left the country without a head to guide its course, and led the way to the accession of Charles the Second. It must be admitted, that the national power, as wielded by Cromwell, was as formidable abroad, and as much respected by the enemies of England, as at any period of the history of the country. Extraordinary energy is generally the result of a change of government of a country. The excitement of the people, and the action forced on the government, take other countries in a state of quiescence by surprise, and hence the strength of the reformed or revolutionized country.

The restoration of Charles brought back to power the aristocratic party, and the high-church section of it rose in influence and intolerance. The unprincipled character of Charles affected all the measures of his reign. Even the parliament, after voting him liberal supplies, distrusted him in their application. He was profligate in his conduct, and was accused of having received bribes on the conclusion of a continental treaty: and a treaty with the Dutch was frustrated by his applying the money required, to his own purposes. Fierce commercial wars with the Dutch, domestic calamities of fire and plague, political intrigues, and religious persecutions distracted the country, and imbittered the minds of the people during the whole of the reign of this unprincipled monarch, who was acquiring uncontrolled power over the liberties of the people, when he was fortunately cut short in his career by a sudden disease.

The three troubled years of James the Second, together with the acts of the judicial monster Jefferies, appear more like passages in the history of the Roman Nero, than events recorded in the annals of Christian England. But the deeds of cruelty, perpetrated by these two infamous men, died

with them, and left their black stain on the page of the national history. This reign is, however, of terrible interest to the generation existing in the present day, as in it was completed a change in the plan of taxation, which has led to a system of most severe fiscal exaction in this country. Cupidity and moral cowardice actuated the parliament during the reign of the arbitrary James ; the landed aristocracy threw the burden off themselves, and, cowed by the influence of the king, voted the customs, and excise, and hearth-money, in lieu of the land-taxes and other feudal duties. The present inhabitants of Great Britain have therefore every reason to remember with execration James the Second, and his corrupt parliament. This wretched king fell into perfect contempt, and in an agony of mind cried out, that his own children forsook him.

He absconded from, rather than abdicated the government, and was succeeded by William of Orange, who was elected to the throne of England by a majority of two voices of the legislature.

This election of a new family to the throne by the representatives of the people, whether those representatives were legitimately returned or not, was a most important event, as it established the principle that the sovereign of these realms derived his title from the people. This event formed the Revolution of 1688.

Although the people were acknowledged as the basis of the kingly power, yet it appeared that the aristocratic party, who negotiated the election of William, neglected or betrayed the interests of the people, by not at the same time establishing the principles of a full and true representation of them in the popular branch of the legislature. Had the interests of the people been faithfully attended to, at this interesting epoch in their history, many beneficial

changes would have resulted to the country. This neglect or betrayal of the people very quickly led to open bribery at elections of members to parliament. "Voters were bought as cattle in a market." The king became disgusted with the selfish nature of the Aristocracy that surrounded him, and insisted on the restoration of the land-tax, and taxes on other property, in order to relieve the industry of the people. William not having been accustomed to the movements of popular bodies represented in parliament, became irritated by the opposition that he encountered, and actually threatened to abdicate the throne, and retire to his native country. But a sort of compromise was made. He left the domestic affairs of the kingdom very much to the governing party, provided that he was allowed to carry on the foreign wars in his own way. By this arrangement the power of the Aristocracy was consolidated more and more over the people at home; and that terrible curse of a national debt was in this reign begun, to defray the expenses of continental wars, entered into and carried on to gratify the ambition of the king, and not for objects truly national to England. From these remarks may be learned the secret of the moving spring of most of the wars which have wasted the treasure and blood of this country, and entailed on the people the load of such an enormous debt. The first four sovereigns, from the Revolution down to past the middle of the last century, were foreigners who, through intrigue and continental predilection, involved their adopted country in wars for no adequate object; and venal and corrupt parliaments supplied the funds, in barter for power and influence at home.

The parliamentary proceedings in the year 1699 were marked by an Agrarian law of considerable importance. Great numbers of persons had been outlawed, and their

lands were forfeited to the State. The lands contained about a million of acres, great part of which had been granted by the king to his favourites, but the parliament determined that they should be sold for the public account, and the proceeds applied to discharge debts incurred in the wars. The king opposed this reasonable plan, but finding that the House of Commons were determined on carrying the measure, he yielded, and sent a private message to his friends in the House of Peers, to suspend their opposition.

The accession of Queen Anne in the year 1702, was followed by court-intrigues of influential persons, for the favour and countenance of the sovereign—by party struggles for the possession of power—by brilliant but nationally fruitless military achievements, of which all that remains is the reputation of Marlborough as the greatest general of that age—by the intoxication of the people with the draught of victory—and a reign of twelve years terminated with a great addition to the national debt, and the taxation increased by new burdens on the consumption of the people. The debt at the death of Anne was £54,000,000, of which about £32,000,000 was incurred in continental wars, that left nothing to the nation but empty glory. The great event of Queen Anne's reign, was the Union of England and Scotland.

The Elector of Hanover came to the throne in 1714, under the title of George the First, having succeeded in virtue of the act of settlement at the Revolution, and of the act for the ascendancy of the Protestant religion, in 1712. George I. died in 1727, and was succeeded by his son, George II., whose death took place in 1760.

This period of forty-six years of the first two Georges, embraced several events of great importance to the British

nation, but which, together with other circumstances, tended to increase and consolidate the power and influence of the aristocratic party, and proportionably to weaken the popular cause. These two sovereigns were foreigners by birth, and aliens to the habits and feelings of British men. They were Germans, in constitution, character, and prejudices, and therefore incompetent to govern a great nation like Great Britain and Ireland, the inhabitants of which were composed of materials so different from those of a contracted continental principality.

As the members of families only of rank and influence in the country, approach and surround the throne, a foreigner called to be king, must necessarily at first receive all his information, and take all his impressions, from the persons who come in daily communication with him. Hence his dependence on them, and hence the danger of his acting upon partial representations of the state of the country, and its interests. He is apt to lean on individuals, who soon learn to make themselves agreeable and even necessary to him, in his conduct of affairs. His weak points are soon discovered, and seized on by those who surround him, and turned to personal or party advantage. These few words explain the principles of danger, which lie hid within the limits of a court, to the cause of the liberty and the property of a nation.

Under the two first Georges, therefore, we find, from the history of the country, that the aristocratic party, by means of a hired and corrupt majority in the legislature, pursued a course of policy in foreign relations, adapted to gratify the desires, and even to humour the prejudices, of kings who were German in their hearts and predilections.

The English people, besides being taxed enormously, to promote the German schemes and alliances of George I.,

had the mortification of being laughed at by all the world for their simplicity. He actually was permitted by the parliament, to add to his continental possessions by purchase with English money. As early as 1719, it was said that "Great Britain had become the ally to the whole world, and a bubble to all its allies." The House of Commons voted 4,000 additional seamen, to secure Bremen and Verden to the Hanoverian possessions; and, in 1727, decided to support the King in all attempts to maintain the integrity of his German dominions. Even fifteen years later, under the second George, the measures of the ministry had been regulated by the interests of the electoral dominions, which had become the gulf that swallowed up the treasures of Great Britain. This country was actually a dependency on the interests of Hanover, as the king and the venal parliaments gave preferable attention to the latter.

Had the people of this nation been consulted, they would have said to the king, "Make your election between your own limited territories, and this great nation, but we will not allow you to promote the interests of the first to our prejudice." How happy does it now appear for this country, that the salique law prevails in the electoral dominions! by which, under our present sovereign, we have got quit of a territory which entailed wars and all their miseries on this country. The first William Pitt was dismissed by George the Second, for opposing his German alliances: but he was shortly afterwards re-admitted into council, as his commanding talents could not be dispensed with.

It thus appears that the personal character and circumstances of the two first Georges, tended to increase and consolidate the power of the governing aristocratic party. But other events in the first half of the last century, lent their aid to the same end, and also to alarm the people of

this country into a passive submission to power. These events were, the rebellion that broke out in the country, to replace the exiled Stuarts on the throne, and hostile demonstrations by France, to invade the British soil in support of that despotic race. The rebellion, which broke out in the years 1715 and 1745, and that were suppressed after spreading for a time great confusion and alarm, had very important consequences. The threat of invasion by the French, alarmed the people of Great Britain, and the attempts to grasp the crown terrified the king. The dominant faction took advantage of both, to extend their influence.

That great encroachment on the liberties of the people, through the extension of the duration of parliaments to seven years, from the term of three years, as fixed at the Revolution of 1688, was made during the alarm caused by the rebellion of 1716; and this obnoxious law has now been in operation for 126 years, although it was passed for the exigency of a temporary danger! How jealous a people ought to be of every approach to touch the bulwarks of their liberty! In a moment of weakness or credulity of the people, a law may be passed dangerous to freedom and property, which it may require centuries to remove.

The people, about the time referred to, were mocked with their system of representation, and the parliament was neither more nor less than a den of thieves. The opposite factions in it mutually protected their adherents from the consequences of gross bribery at elections.

The plunder of the public, by the famous South Sea schemers, and by the society called the Charitable Corporation, was participated in by many members of the legislature and by men of great influence in the government, who were expelled or impeached for their acts. So noto-

rious were the abuses practised in this country, that the Pretender to the throne, in his declaration made, in 1722, to the inhabitants of the British Islands, and to foreign princes and states, in support of his claims, mentioned, among other things, the bribes, threats, and violation of the freedom at the elections of members to parliament—the oppressive measures of landlords to their tenants—and the irregular proceedings of the House of Commons in its judgments. A valuable lesson is to be learned from this, and which is, that cruelty and injustice to a people by the governing power give a handle to the enemies of the country to disturb its peace. It appears from history, that the invasion and rebellion in 1745 were undertaken by Charles Stuart, in the belief that the kingdom was ready to rise in his favour, as it could no longer bear the burden of taxation imposed by the government.*

Wars with France and Spain drained the coffers of the industrious classes, and the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, made all the sacrifices in vain, and threw disgrace on this nation by the almost unparalleled circumstance of the delivery of two hostages to France as guarantees for the restitution of all conquests made by England during the war.

The suppression of the rebellion, the bloody vengeance inflicted on the rebels, and the restoration of peace, removed the fears of the governing classes, who began to consider their interests as distinct from those of the people. The game laws, replete with the worst spirit, were passed in the year 1753, and reminded the people of England of the dark ages.

* Cupidity and loyalty went hand in hand in the transactions of this period, as the confiscation of the valuable estates of the rebels enriched individuals who supported the new dynasty.

Two years after those laws were passed, a war broke out with France, for the preservation and extension of our colonies, and continued till 1763, the third year of the accession of George III., when peace was settled by the treaty of Paris.

In these observations, historical events are alluded to, chiefly as they bear on the subject of taxation. The national debt, at the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1748, amounted to £78,000,000, and in fifteen years more, at the treaty of Paris, it had increased to £134,000,000. It would appear, that there was the greatest recklessness in parliament, in raising taxes and voting the proceeds. The people were considered mere machines for raising funds. Members of the legislature enriched themselves by large taxation.

It appears from the history of the period, that subsidies were voted for some project on the Continent—to Sweden—to the Queen of Hungary—King of Sardinia—and to German principalities. But, as the amount of the public debt increased, and the interest thereon began to weigh heavily, the burden was shifted as much as possible to the industry of the people. Duties on consumption continued to increase, and in different years, great discontents, even to riots, broke out on the levying taxes on malt and cider.

George the Third, at the youthful age of twenty, ascended the throne in the year 1760, and as he had been educated under the eye of the high aristocratic party, he imbibed their principles, and adopted their exclusive policy. The personal character and disposition of the sovereign are of great importance. George the Third was a man constituted to do great good, or to inflict great evil, in spite of his own views of his public actions. To use the phraseology of a plausible theory, which lies like truth, the mental facial angle of this monarch, confined him to the

perception of one object only at a time; but he grasped this object with a tenacity peculiar to minds like his. The party that surrounded him, and whose counsels he followed, ruled him through the obstinacy of his own character, and, during a reign of half a century, acquired a power and influence beyond anything recorded in history. Circumstances combined also to consolidate this power, through the fears, the hopes, and the generous qualities of the British and Irish people. The British nativity of the king—his youth—a bluntness of manner congenial to the national feeling—his sedateness—his domestic regularity, all united to draw towards him the affections of his subjects. On the other hand, public events led to the popularity of his kingly character. A young prince of a vigorous constitution, offered the guarantee for domestic peace, to follow the risks and anxieties of rebellions raised to place an obnoxious family on the throne, and he was therefore hailed as a monarch, who was to persevere the country from internal and foreign disturbances. The brilliant success of our arms in Canada, and the conclusion of a long and expensive war on terms honourable for the nation, at the beginning of his reign, raised the spirits and gratified the feelings of the people, animated with genuine loyalty to their young sovereign. Even although taxation was heavy, and weighed with unequal pressure on the mass of the people, and caused serious disturbances in some of the large cities, still there was a disposition evinced by the governing party to provide cheap food.

Within ten years from the accession of George, a change was made, favourable to that object, by the discontinuance of the bounty, which had been allowed by act of parliament on the exportation of wheat from this country; and by the opening of the ports for the introduction of foreign grain;

measures which, it was stated, soon relieved the distresses of the poor.

But while the people were satisfied with their young King, and looked forward with confidence to a peaceful reign, the aristocratic party did not fail to take measures for their own advantage. Two or three powerful families, as the representatives of the order, acquired a strong influence over the mind of the King—who, in one month, made more peers, to increase their votes in parliament, than had been created in the whole of the preceding reign. The King was impressed with the importance of the royal prerogatives, and this feeling was not damped by the governing party, so long as their own power and privileges were preserved intact. This is the secret of the policy of the governing power under the reign of George the Third, and is the spring of all the events of that momentous period.

Two of the greatest revolutions which ever turned the world, took their rise, and finished their first great cycles, in the reign of this monarch—revolutions which, for a thousand years to come, will continue to influence the destiny of mankind. The first was the British colonial revolution, which broke out on the attempt of the governing party at home to tax the colonists without parliamentary representation. The second was the French Revolution, which sprang from causes inherent in the French nation, and, if left alone by foreign nations, would in all probability have wound itself up within the limits of that country. But the British aristocratic power, headed by the monarch, galled by the triumph achieved by America, incapable of comprehending the principles of movement in a great people, and alarmed for their own privileges, threw themselves into the French Revolution—which, in consequence, rushed abroad, and deposed almost every monarch, and dashed to pieces

almost every throne, in Europe. This result was, of course, not designed by George the Third and his Aristocracy, but it taught the great truth to the world, from the mouth of Napoleon, that "a throne is only deal boards, covered with purple velvet," unless it be surrounded and protected by a contented people, loyal from a conviction of the blessings which they enjoy.*

In a reign of fifty years, embracing such a variety of momentous transactions, it is difficult to select incidents, as the best illustration of events passing at the present time.

In the year 1780, the celebrated motion was carried in the House of Commons, by a majority of 233 to 215,—*"That it is now necessary to declare, that the influence of the Crown has increased—is increasing—and ought to be diminished."* It would appear, that this was mistaking the effect for the cause; and if for the word "*Crown*" had "*Aristocracy*" been substituted, it would have expressed the true state of parties.

However, the popular feeling was not to be mistaken, and in the year 1782 the war with the American States was put an end to by the formal acknowledgment of their independence of this country.† And in the same year the hopes of this nation were raised by the motion of William Pitt for a reform of the Commons House of Parliament; but which was rejected by 161 votes to 141.

* The French Guards of Louis XVI., at Versailles, threw down their arms, rather than fire on their fellow-citizens.

† The king, on signing the treaty, had the grace to remark to the American ambassador, "that as he had been the last to yield to terms, he would also be the last to break the bond of peace and independence thus established." Compulsion is a very effectual method of putting men on their good behaviour.

The national debt at the termination of the American war of independence, amounted to about £250,000,000. The war cost about 120,000,000, incurred in an attempt to force the Americans to bear part of a taxation, the consequence of old Continental struggles, the object of which can only be ascertained by ransacking the secret archives of European cabinets.

The discoveries in machinery, the improvement of our manufactures, and the consequent extension of our commerce, since the accession of George the Third, enabled the citizens, from their increased means, to bear the taxation with comparative ease.* This was quickly perceived by the governing party, who, in a dishonest spirit, after having entered into that terrible struggle with France which has caused such miseries to this country, fixed by law a limit to the tax on land, and rated the amount at about the same as it had been ninety years before. The amount of land-tax to be for ever collected, was limited to about £2,000,000 a year, with the privilege of redemption by land-owners; and at the end of fifty years from the passing of the law, the amount, as already stated, has dwindled down to about £1,200,000. These facts cannot be too often repeated, and pressed on the attention of the people of this country.

The country became involved in a terrible war with the most powerful and enthusiastic nation in Europe, and it saw no prospect of a termination to it; but, on the contrary, the lives and properties of the existing generation appeared completely pledged in the struggle. And in such appalling circumstances, a law was made to limit the responsibility of the very men who led the country into them!

* And in this spirit of taxing industry, the landed interest, in the year 1791, passed a law *prohibiting* the importation of wheat into this country, if the price were below 54s. a quarter in the home market.

It is true, that the income-tax was laid on ; but the land-owners virtually did not pay as much as the citizens who had no voice in the making of the law, and who derived their incomes from trade, to which they applied all their time and industry.

A war is a great calamity to a nation, however glorious its actions may be. It may be undertaken for objects in which the mass of the citizens have no interest—it may be entered into for purposes of mere personal ambition or privilege ; but so awful are its consequences, that the parties, however unprincipled they may be who engage in it, are most particular in their manifestos in giving a colour of justice and self-defence to the enterprise into which they are about to lead so many millions of men. They so plan their schemes as to provoke their enemy to strike the first blow, in order to deceive the world into a belief that the real aggressors are beginning a just and defensive war. The first act of the war that commenced in 1792-3 appeared to be by France ; but if the events that preceded the declaration of that country be examined, it will be found that the British aristocratic power was like the wolf towards the lamb in the fable.

But as soon as a country is engaged in actual hostilities, and the minds of the people become excited, the cause of the quarrel is generally lost sight of, and sympathy for our gallant sailors and soldiers, and aspirations for their success, take possession of the hearts of the citizens who remain protected at home. With respect to the men who really draw the sword and handle the musket, the sentiment of the gallant Blake, in the wars of Cromwell, inspires them in danger—"That it is still their duty to fight for their country, into what hands soever the government may fall."

The war from 1792 to 1815 was a terrible struggle; and, as far as the dramatic effect, it was eminently triumphant for this country. Now that a new generation has risen up, and the shouts of victory have died on the ear, we can trace to the proper causes the several actions of the war. We can now discern the hand of Providence as having struck the stunning blow, through the snows and frosts of Russia, on the head of that extraordinary man who moved the world, and who, three years afterwards, was a prisoner in the hands of Europe.

Although parties may differ in opinion on the real objects and policy of the great French revolutionary war, as they affected this country, there can be no doubt of the results as historical facts. On the outbreak of the revolution, we received into this country the legitimate successor to the throne of France, supported him, and recognized him as the heir, and, at the conclusion of the war, reinstated him by force in the government of that country. This established the war, in its origin and termination, as one of dynasty, in favour of a family for whom the British nation had really little or no sympathy, but for whom it was made to sacrifice so much.

This country was persevering and obstinate in the prosecution of the war, as the feelings and passions of the people, during the latter part of it, had become ardent and excited: and the applause of the world was loudly heard at the termination of the terrible conflict. But as a great colonial, commercial, and naval empire, the present generation may ask, with much bitterness of soul, what we gained by our conquests and great military achievements? Were there any commercial treaties, with the great European nations, established after the confidence and flush of victory at Waterloo? How shamefully the national inte-

rests were neglected, and even betrayed by our negociators at the European Congresses! We could have dictated our own terms to almost every nation in Europe, and even on terms that would have been wise and generous to the very nations that we saved. We fought, on the plains of Spain, our own battles with the enemy of our country; but did that country owe us nothing for freeing her soil, and securing her independence of Napoleon! Had our rulers been men of enlightened views and patriotic principles, both countries might, at this day, have been united in bonds of mutual happiness and prosperity—the one, in the cultivation of her extensive and fertile fields, the produce of which would have been exchanged for the merchandise of this country. How many colonies taken during the war were restored at the peace! Java, which has been appropriately called the Garden of the World, was given back to the Dutch by the British minister of the day, in ignorance of the value and importance of that island. It has been said that some documents or despatches sent from Sir Stamford Raffles relative to Java, were found unopened after the treaty of cession had been signed and ratified. And it is further said, that the nature of these communications was such as would have prevented the cession of that most valuable colony. But all that we can now do is to indulge in vain regret at the acts of folly, ignorance, or negligence of the men who, at the end of the great war, had the destinies of this country in their hands.* At this time it will impress

* The British nation will have, to the latest generation, cause to execrate the memory of Lord Castlereagh, for his want of patriotism at that juncture in the affairs of Europe, which gave this country an ascendancy which ought to have secured for it some advantage in return for its sacrifices. But that individual was under the influence of a morbid vanity, and was the prey of imbecility of character. The weak man could not forget the remark made on some occasion by Napoleon, *that we were a nation of shop-*

on the people of this country the absolute necessity, for their own safety, of bringing home to public men a real responsibility.

It will perhaps be new to the great majority of individuals born since the year 1815, to learn that we surrendered to France, at the peace celebrated in that year, the vain pretension which our sovereigns used to retain to the crown of that country. George the Third, like his predecessors, claimed to be "King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland," down to the treaty after the battle of Waterloo. This is a circumstance worth knowing, and reflecting on, and it will lead to the conclusion that, in our laws and institutions, there are many things retained as sacred, which, in their essence, are as absurd and bombastical as the pretensions kept up in state-documents to the throne of France by a British king, at the beginning of the nineteenth century !

To the same portion of the community, it will be still more interesting to know the cost of so much war, glorious victory, fruitless treaties, barren conquests, and the surrender of kingly pretensions.

This war of twenty-three years' duration, cost us about eleven hundred million of pounds sterling, and has added permanently to the national debt about £500,000,000. The total amount of the public debt at the conclusion of the war was about £800,000,000.

keepers ; an observation that redounded to our honour, and recoiled on himself, as having fallen before a people whom he affected to despise. But Castlereagh showed the weakness of being ashamed ; and, in the spirit of *genuine* vulgarity, acted the braggadocio, and aped the magnificence of the conqueror, by a false generosity at the sacrifice of the best interests of his country. It has been said, with much severity, but with truth, that his great act of patriotism was that which stopped his power of doing farther damage to his country.

The history of the commercial, financial, and fiscal state of the British empire, during that terrible struggle, will constitute a study for generations yet to come. The history of it is marvellous, in as much as a war of unparalleled duration, of corresponding sacrifice of life and treasure, gave to the country, in all its departments, an appearance of extraordinary prosperity. This is a subject on which numberless writers have employed their pens, to the production of countless volumes and pamphlets. The leading facts cannot be too often repeated, and kept before the view of the people of this country, in order to serve as beacons in the progress of the nation; and to warn the men entrusted with the management of the public affairs.

The total amount raised by loans and	
taxes from the beginning of 1793 to that	
of 1816, was about	£1,560,000,000
Deduct for the expenses of the country,	
supposing that it had remained at peace	
during that period	460,000,000

Expense of war £1,100,000,000

Of this enormous amount of £1,560,000,000 only about £120,000,000 was raised by taxes on land and property, leaving £1,440,000,000, or about 92 per cent of the whole, raised from the consumption or levied on the industry of the people: Say

Consumption and industry	92 per cent.
Property and land	8 „

100 per cent.

There is in this statement no fair proportion. The cry of “property being in danger” was heard at the beginning

of the war, and was continued during its progress. The safety of property was indeed the great object in view, and, notwithstanding this, the industrious labourers and tradespeople were charged with 92 per cent. of the taxation. How different matters would have been, had property been compelled to pay its fair proportion ! and can one be surprised, under a continuance of such a system for about fifty years, to find society divided into two classes ; one a small number possessed of enormous wealth, and the other the mass of the people, struggling for existence and sinking year after year in destitution and extreme misery. This inequality, and spoliative principle in the distribution of the public burdens, are the true causes of the decadence of the great leading interests of the British empire. The legislative or aristocratic class grow wealthy and powerful year after year, in the ratio of the increasing poverty of the industrious or productive classes. There is a power of suction by the first, which is extending the vacuum in society, to a degree that will either lead to complete exhaustion, or will cause the machine to burst, and shiver into ten thousand atoms the system of the country.

It is well that in the present day things should be clearly explained ; and the possessors of exorbitant wealth and power ; if they do not relax their hold so as to leave something to others, must be reminded, that the latter catastrophe is more likely to happen than a total collapse of popular strength. And happy it is that there is in human nature this reactive principle ; for without it, entire nations and races of men would become extinct from the face of the earth.

It is one of the incomprehensible things in the history of this country, how the people got over the struggle of the last war. They staggered through it under the influence

of a strong artificial excitement. In the first place the monetary system of the country was adapted to the extraordinary state of matters, and a paper currency was issued to an amount, as if the day of redemption was never to come.* This increase of paper money began in 1797, and two years afterwards the property tax was laid on.

In order to be able to form a comparative idea of matters towards the conclusion of the war, we shall take the following statements for the last five years, 1811 and 1815.

The population of Great Britain and Ireland, in 1811 was, in round numbers about 18,000,000.

The declared value of the exports from Great Britain and Ireland, of British produce and manufactures, was:—

Years.	Value of Produce.	Loans and Taxes
1811 .	£34,917,000 . .	£92,180,000
1812 .	43,657,000 . .	103,421,000
1813 .	43,000,000 . .	120,952,000
1814 .	43,447,000 . .	116,843,000
1815 .	49,653,000 . .	116,491,000
	<hr/> £214,674,000 ..	<hr/> £549,887,000
	<hr/> £42,935,000	<hr/> £109,977,000
	Average of 5 years' war.	Previous to peace.

The restoration of general peace caused at once the cessation of loans, and led to a reduction of taxation. The first burden that was thrown off was the property and

* At the end of the war in 1815, the amount of the Bank of England notes in circulation was . . . £27,298,290
Country Bank notes . . . 20,000,000

" Total . £47,298,290

In September and December, 1841, with a population of 27,000,000, the Bank of England circulation was only £17,000,000. Other Banks in England, Scotland, and Ireland, about £18,000,000.

income tax. The annual average of the first five years of peace (1816 to 1820,) was £64,000,000, thus causing the amount of £46,000,000 to be immediately withdrawn from government expenditure—in other words, from the circulation. The average of the amount of British produce and manufactures, exported for the same period, was about the same as the five years previous to the peace, say £43,000,000.

The average annual amount of taxes and loans, 1811 to 1815, for men, women, and children, peasant and lord, was £6 2s. each. The same for the first five years of peace, was £3. 11s. 1816 to 1820.

The extraordinary increase to the circulation of money, from the enormous amount of war-taxes and loans down to the year 1815, as a matter of course, raised the nominal price of every article of property and merchandise. Everything during the war rose in value; and when peace came, people were astonished to find an immediate and permanent depreciation of prices: this was quite natural, and ought to have been expected; for when there is a general fall of price, from the greater value of money, all interests are affected in nearly the same proportion, and everything in a short time settles itself to the new scale.* But, in the cases of corn, and rents of land, a power interfered to make an exception. Without entering into the various causes assigned for the rise in the rent of lands, and the great fluctuations in the price of wheat, during the war from 1792 to 1815, it will be sufficient to state the fact, that

* The amount of Bank of England notes in circulation in 1792 was £11,560,000; in 1815, £27,298,000; in 1841, with the population increased about 50 per cent. since 1815, £17,000,000.

In these three sums, at the respective periods, is contained the solution of the mystery that lies over the financial condition of this country.

land, rented in 1792 at £170, was ten years afterwards valued at £240, and at the conclusion of the war brought a rental of about £320, being an advance of 90 per cent. on its value within twenty-three years.

This is supposed to represent an increase of rental, without reference to improvements on the soil. The gradual advance in the price of wheat, pretty nearly corresponded with the rise in the value of land, as will appear from the following statement :

1780 to 1790 the average price was 51s. 0d. per quarter.

1795 “ 1799	do.	do.	70s. 8d.	“
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1800 “ 1808	do.	do.	86s. 8d.	“
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1811 “ 1815	do.	do.	93s. 2d.	“
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The fluctuations were very great—the price of wheat in the years 1809 to 1813, having been as high as 110s. per quarter.*

From a very small segment the entire circumference of the circle can be measured, and with the few data laid down in the foregoing statement, the whole system of the corn-law of the year 1815 can be encompassed. Mr. Macculloch, in his Commercial Dictionary, under the head of Corn-Laws, says—“The real object of the corn-law of 1815, was to keep the price of corn to 80s. a quarter; but to succeed in this, it was indispensable, not only that foreign corn should be excluded when prices were under this limit, but, that the markets should never be overloaded with corn produced at home.”†

This law was a cruel return to the British people, on their securing an honourable peace after a war of 22 years,

* These figures in the text are chiefly taken from Mr. Lowe's State of England in 1822, a valuable work, comparative of its condition in the peace after 1815, and the terrible war from 1792 to 1815.

† Commercial Dictionary, p. 387.

sustained with a valour, and at a sacrifice of life and property, never before experienced in the world. They had actually become wearied with victory and its excitement, and longed for the quiet and security of a state of peace. With the confidence characteristic of a generous people, they left to the party in power, the adjustment of the great measures which the domestic and foreign relations of the country required, at that most interesting era of national existence. But who could have imagined, that it would have entered into the hearts of men at such a juncture, to pass a law to counteract the very design of God in giving peace to mankind! Men, in all ages and of every nation, connect a state of peace with an abundance of the blessings of life; "Peace and Plenty" is a proverbial saying or wish, deeply embedded in the English language. The corn-law of 1815 was expressly designed, according to the authority of the celebrated writer quoted, to maintain bread at a war-price, during a period of peace, by PROHIBITING its introduction from abroad, and by limiting its production at home. It was truly and actually to make "peace and scarcity" go together. The instant that it was perceived, that the peace of 1814 was producing the effects of abundance of food and low prices, the persons who held the keys of the British House of Commons, set about the concoction of the corn-laws. But man cannot counteract the operations of seasons, and it was found that wheat fell instead of rising in price; and once in 1822, and again in 1828, the laws taxing or prohibiting bread-corn, were modified to circumstances.

The pretext used for the enactment of these laws, was the encouragement of agriculture, in order to make this country independent of foreign supplies in time of war. But, in answer to this, it may be asked, was the peace

established after the battle of Waterloo only a truce, to prepare for another war? Was it a mere breathing-time, between one fearful struggle and another, for which preparations were to be made by these laws?

The hopes and expectations universally entertained by men at that period, contradict this hypothesis; and an appeal is only to be made, to the persons who remember the circumstances, for the confirmation of a general belief, that Europe was on the eve of a long period of peace. And what did the treaties of Paris and Vienna establish, but the very peace of Europe, which has endured for twenty-seven years unbroken? The wars which have disturbed Spain and Turkey within these last ten years, have had their origin from circumstances independent of those treaties.

What gratuitous cruelty it was, therefore, to restrict this country in its supplies of food, for some indefinite period of future war!

But the cruelty of the spirit is only to be matched by the assurance of the authors of these laws; for, during the war of twenty years, this country received more corn from abroad, than in an equal period at any time before. In the twenty years down to 1792, the quantity of wheat imported from foreign countries, was 1,041,781 quarters; and in the twenty years of war down to 1812, the quantity was 10,625,472 quarters! The high prices of corn, during the war, were partly from failures of harvest, but chiefly from the depreciation of our currency, and consequent increase of money.

The delusion which has been practised on this country, during the last thirty years, on the question of the corn-laws, will be considered in another generation one of the most extraordinary phenomena in the history of the human mind. It will then be perceived, that this matter, which

has engrossed the attention of senates—employed the ingenuity and sophistry of men termed statesmen—exercised the talents of able writers—called forth the industry of numberless individuals engaged in the periodical press—confused the wits of every man, woman, and child in the British empire—and actually put the world off its propriety—had its origin in the motives of a set of men, who made the laws for themselves, to keep up the value of land at three hundred and twenty pounds instead of one hundred and seventy pounds,* and thereby prevent mortgages which had been given on these lands, from being forfeited by a depreciation of the value of the property below the sum borrowed on the lands. It is with a degree of pain, that this explanation is given, as it implies the existence of a degree of credulity, or a disposition to be deceived, in the worthy people of the British islands, which forms an instructive commentary on the observation of Oxenstiern, the celebrated Swedish statesman, to his son,—“to see with how little wisdom the world is governed !”

One of the arguments used, at the end of a quarter of a century, by the supporters of the corn-laws, is, that these laws are not injurious to the country, *because* the people have prospered, or at least have kept up under their operations.

But because a strong and skilful swimmer can keep the water, and perhaps stem the current, with a weight between his shoulders, does it follow that the weight is any aid to him in his progress !

The retrospect of the reign of George the Third, to the death of that monarch in 1820, presents many stupendous events both in this country and in other countries of Europe and America. Among the events that took place at home, one has not been alluded to, and that is, the

* Page 48 of Lowe's State of England in 1822.

mutiny which broke out in the British fleet in the year 1797. When one reflects on the state of the affairs of this country at that juncture, engaged in a war with a neighbouring nation, a degree of horror seizes the mind on considering that event, even at the distance of nearly fifty years; and it is impossible to convey an adequate idea of the consternation which fell on the people and government when it took place.

Forty large ships of war were in the hands of mutinous crews, who resisted the orders of the government, and a fleet of fifteen sail of the line, lying at Yarmouth, wavered in its obedience. The whole disposable home-fleet was thus at the mercy of those desperate men, who might in forty-eight hours have delivered the ships to the inveterate enemies of the country. But, to the eternal honour of British seamen, it is recorded that it was their determination to fight the enemy with unanimity, and with their accustomed valour, should any attempt be made by the French to take advantage of the disputes between the sailors and the constituted power of their country. The seamen who thus turned their arms against the naval authorities, and through them on the government, were driven into their desperate position by a long course of "*oppressive cruelty and bad usage*," which they could bear no longer. Men, to whose exertions during gale and battle the very safety of the nation was entrusted, were actually defrauded of their just wages, and, in the supply of provisions, were exposed to the grossest imposition in the quantity and quality of the most necessary food. They at first petitioned for redress of grievances, and then remonstrated against the denial of justice, and at length broke out into mutiny more in despair, than from disloyalty to their king and country. After two months of intense

anxiety by the nation, matters were settled, and in the course of the same year, the victories of Cape St. Vincent and Camperdown, blotted out from the minds of the people the memory of the errors of the seamen, and placed in their stead the record of their deeds of skill and of valour.*

The danger from the mutiny of the fleet is here referred to, as an instance of the fatal error committed by a government, by denying justice to any portion of its subjects, especially those whose services are valuable, and even indispensable.

* See the "History of the Mutiny at Spithead and the Nore," in No 80 of the Family Library.

CHAP. III.

THE NATURE OF THE ARISTOCRATIC POWER, AND THE ANALYSIS OF IT.

WHAT PERSONS OR PARTIES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACTS OF THE LAST SIXTY YEARS?—CURIOUS STATE OF THE REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE DOWN TO 1832—ANALYSIS—THE UNDUE INFLUENCE OF THE HEREDITARY LEGISLATURE ON THE POPULAR BRANCH—CONSEQUENCES—EXTRAORDINARY NATURE OF THE BRITISH ARISTOCRATIC BODY—THE LAW OF PRIMOGENITURE IS THE GREAT SUPPORT OF IT—EFFECTS OF THIS LAW ON THE INDIVIDUAL CHARACTER OF ARISTOCRATS—PENSIONS TO ARISTOCRATIC PAUPERS—THE BANEFUL EFFECTS OF THE LAW ON THE CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE—THE SPOILIATORY PRINCIPLES OF IT—THE DIVISION OF THE ARISTOCRATIC POWER INTO TWO RIVAL PARTIES SAVES THE PEOPLE FROM HEAVIER BURDENS—THESE TWO PARTIES DISPUTED IN 1842, ABOUT THE “ELEMENTS OF THEIR POWER”—THE RESULT.

WE now come to the reckoning, or the attachment of responsibility to some party, or class of individuals, for all the deeds and misdeeds of the last sixty years.

The rising generation of the people of the British Islands, who have not yet read the history of their country down to the reign of William the Fourth, may conclude that all the events of that period—the attempts to tax the American colonies without representation—the war that ensued—the loss of those colonies—the heavy debt which was left behind—the interference with the French Revolution—the war in which we became involved—the cruelty and injustice

to our sailors—the settlement of peace in 1815, without securing for our commerce those advantages, which so many sacrifices for foreign countries entitled us to demand—the establishment of laws, to restrict or even prohibit the introduction into the country of corn and other provisions—the entailment of a debt, the interest of which is now paid from the contribution of every poor man, woman, and child, in the shape of taxes on their bread, and on almost every article consumed by them—the establishment of a system of lavish expenditure in all departments of government—a pension-list of royal and noble paupers—and many other things which astonish the weak minds of sensitive people, both at home and abroad—all these events and acts may be supposed by the young students of British history, to have been performed and concluded by and with the consent and sanction of the people of this country, under its government of King, Lords, and Commons—the wonder of the world, and the envy of the surrounding nations. And that consequently the people must bear, without repining, the results of their own wisdom or their own folly.

It is true, that more than one hundred years previous to the year 1815, the British House of Commons was composed of several hundred men, who sat, talked, and made laws, and were seemingly the representatives of the so many millions of inhabitants of England, Wales, and Scotland, and of Ireland, since the beginning of this century.

These six hundred and fifty-eight men, who assembled in an old chapel at Westminster, were no more the representatives of the English, Scotch, and Irish people, than they were of the inhabitants of Hindostan; and indeed they might partly claim to be the representatives of some of the people of that far country, for some nabobs there, in pos-

session of English rotten boroughs, actually returned certain members to parliament.

Our young countryfolks must know, that, forty or fifty years ago, it was the fashion in high life, for families to have negroes for footmen. The taste has changed within these twenty years in this respect, and, what is worse, circumstances have so altered, that our white brethren at home would be glad to change places with negroes, as far as abundance of subsistence and comforts go. But the story goes, that a member of the Commons House boasted, from his knowledge of the system, that he could return his black footman to parliament, and maintain the legality of the election. It is to be wondered that the thing was not done at the period alluded to. Sambo, grinning his maiden speech, would really have been a picturesque object on the ministerial benches, in the latter days of Pitt, or under Liverpool, fixing the importation of wheat at 80s. a quarter.

There was even a degree of sublimity in the very abuses of our system: the genius of a political Milton might have become inspired by the subject, and have given to the world a poem on "Parliament Lost, and Liberty Regained." The pen drops from the hand, conscious of its inability to delineate the system—a system which a Wellington declared to be perfect, and incapable of improvement, and which Peel defended with all that energy and oratorical flourish characteristic of a man in dread of the ruin of his country by some humble but honest countryman acquiring the right to give an independent vote. This system put at defiance all rule, and it could be reduced to no principles of population, property, or moral character of the inhabitants, as the basis of the representation: and yet it was a system of perfection in the estimation of those parties who

had the working of it. It was even maintained that it was the *cause* of the greatness and prosperity of the British nation. But the people themselves, by their activity and intelligent perseverance, were the cause or moving-spring of the greatness of the country, and they prospered *in spite* of every dead-weight laid on them, and against every drawback.

In sketching the outlines of the system of representation, let a map of Great Britain be supposed to be open. We will take the two extremities of the island, to begin with—the county of Cornwall in the south-west, and the whole of the ancient kingdom of Scotland in the north. Although neither size nor population were considered, it may be well to compare the two places mentioned; the population of 1811 is taken in both. Cornwall contained about 852,000 acres, and 216,000 population; Scotland contained about 19,700,000 acres, 1,810,000 population. But Cornwall returned to parliament forty-two members, and Scotland forty-five members: the Cornish were—from boroughs forty, and from the county two. It is not worth the trouble to inquire to whom the boroughs belonged: the men sent to parliament were not the representatives of the inhabitants of those places, but were merely the nominees of certain individuals who made a business of the system.* The inhabitants of Cornwall, generally, are a useful and hard-working class of people, engaged in digging for copper and tin in the bowels of the earth. No rational person will maintain that they required forty-two men to represent their

* Even in the reign of that fanatical tyrant James II. the representation of Cornwall was made an instrument of the Court. Among the events and occurrences of 1685, there is the following observations in Wade's British History: "In Cornwall, the Earl of Bath put the names of the Officers of the Guards in most of the charters of that county, so that the king was sure of forty-four votes on all occasions."

interests in the legislature, even supposing that the forty-two members had been legitimately elected. The people of Scotland have the reputation of possessing as much shrewdness as any portion of the citizens of this country, and are certainly as capable of knowing a hawk from a handsaw, as any of the six hundred and fifty-eight men who every five or seven years assembled as the representatives of the nation. The most remarkable circumstance of the whole system was, the mockery that was made of this sagacious people through their representative system, during a period of about a hundred years. They were told that the forty-five men, who appeared in every parliament, were their representatives; while it was an established fact, at the beginning of the present century, that one person, a member of the government of the time, returned thirty-nine out of that number. This individual was Lord Melville, who was one of the very few public men against whom a direct responsibility was fixed, by his lordship being brought to a solemn public trial for peculation, and other crimes against the Treasury.—The total number of electors, throughout all Scotland, was only 2340, and these were split into a number of self-elected corporations, perfectly irresponsible to the public. The town-council of Edinburgh, consisting of about thirty individuals, tradesmen of that city, nominated the favourite of the minister of the day, as the representative of that enlightened city. The Scotch members were proverbially mere political tools in the hands of the government, without a spirit or conscience of their own, and the English people, accustomed since the Union to see men come up from the north, of the most pliant dispositions, mistook them for the representatives of the people; and as travelling in those days was rare, they attached to the nation a character of subserviency which strictly belonged

only to the political nominees of some men of power. Hence the origin of those libels and caricatures of the Scottish character, that appeared about the middle of last century, which even to this day are entertained by the vulgar and ill-informed. The English knew themselves, and were too well aware of the nature of their own mock-representation, to be accountable for the political corruption of their legislators.

Old Sarum, Gatton, Appleby, Midhurst, and more than fifty other boroughs, without importance, and many without houses or inhabitants, were monuments of the wisdom of bygone ages, and of existing perfection. Old Sarum consisted of some old mounds and thorn bushes, and returned two members; and so on with the rest. Borough property, or property invested with legislative power, was invaluable; and it is said that Napoleon contemplated the purchase of some, in order to secure votes in the British parliament. Anything strange is credible of those times!

The extravagant proportion of men sent to Parliament from Cornwall—the gross system of misrepresentation of Scotland—the barbarity displayed in the cases of Gatton and other extinct constituencies—the vested right in the elective franchise in counties and towns—were all crowned with the monster-abuse of the populous, wealthy, and intelligent manufacturing districts being entirely destitute of representation in the legislature; and whose interests, of immense value, were left in consequence to the mercy of political adventurers, who received their pay and their opinions from their titled patrons, and who appeared as the representatives of Cornwall or of Caithness. A man, even of mature age, awakens as if from a dream, on recollecting that it is only ten years since Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, Wolverhampton, Bolton, Blackburn, Old-

ham, Halifax, Macclesfield, Stockport, and thirty other industrious and wealthy communities, were allowed to return members to represent their affairs in Parliament. The population of the eleven places enumerated, was 824,607 souls in the year 1831, and of the other thirty towns and districts, 1,728,900 souls, of whom about 990,000 belonged to the metropolitan districts. There were thus 2,553,500 of the most productive and intelligent of the population, who had no voice in the making of the laws, and who had no legitimate organ through which to make their grievances known to the government of the country. It is, at the present time of manufacturing and commercial embarrassment and distress, of the utmost importance to keep these facts in view before the public. An individual may for many years pursue a course of conduct without experiencing the loss or ruin which such conduct carries along with it—and a nation may, for half a century, bear up under unjust and impolitic laws, without feeling the painful effects of them. The important thing is to trace evils to their source ; and as soon as the cause is clearly ascertained, the cure can be commenced with confidence. On applying the plainest common sense to this question, will any person be surprised at a decadence or loss of trade—at poverty, distress, and destitution spreading with rapid strides among a dense population—when it is considered that the laws by which this great manufacturing and commercial people are governed, were made by a class of men who knew little, and who did not wish to know much, of the interests of this people, and who with ignorance and prejudice were wont to look down on them, and with sneers call them a “swinish multitude,” the “unwashed,” with other epithets of scorn and contempt !

As the time is approaching for a great change in the

system of policy for this country, it is fit and proper that a responsibility be fastened on some system, or some class of the population, for the consequences that now fall upon the community; and in order to fix this responsibility, the following statement of the general plan of the parliamentary representation during the great revolutionary war, and down to the year 1832, is submitted—

Members returned to Parliament, supposed to	
have been the representatives of the people of	
England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland . . .	658
Returned as follows:—	
By 80 or 90 Peers, for England and Wales . . .	218
By 20 to 25 Peers, for Scotland	31
By 32 to 36 Peers, for Ireland	51
	— 300
By 90 Commoners, for England and Wales . . .	137
By 14 Commoners, for Scotland	14
By 19 Commoners, for Ireland	20
By Government	16
	— 187
Returned by nomination of individuals . . .	487
Leaving 171 members returned by constituencies	
. not altogether dependent on patrons . . .	171
	—
	*658

The total number of British peers, exclusive of the Scotch and Irish peers, is 494; of this number, the large proportion of 430 have been created since the year 1700, leaving 64 as the number composing the House of Peers at the revolution of 1688. It is scarcely worth while to

inquire whether this great increase be in proportion to the general increase of the population in the same period; but one fact is established by it, namely, that the British peerage is one of the most modern date.

It is one of the most singular traits in the English character—a character marked with the most manly lines, and imbued with a noble spirit of independence—to find men bending, as it were, their minds to a few fellow-citizens, the instant that they change their names, or get them disguised under some title, which perhaps has no connection with the circumstances that caused those citizens to be taken notice of by the executive magistrate. But, when it is considered that those individuals, who have perhaps worked their way from small beginnings, and wormed themselves into the favour of the minister of the day, acquire, in virtue of this talismanic change of appellation, a power to tax their less clever or less pliant brethren, and use it too to their own advantage,—the circumstance is extraordinary; and can only be explained by that proneness of the human mind, groping in darkness, to fall down before the idol which superstition has raised from the ground.

There is in old names a prescription which is natural, and may be beneficial, to society. The advantage of a descent from ancestors long favourably known to the neighbourhood, or to the country is considerable. The living representatives of the family, and even the collateral branches of it, feel themselves responsible for the name, and, in addition to the common principles of religion and morality, they have the motive to good conduct, in the desire to maintain the reputation gained from the dead. Who can tell how many young men of humble origin, thrown on the world, filling the ranks of our army and navy, spread over the globe, are sustained under temptation, and

preserved from dishonourable deeds, by the memory of the name of their father, who dropped into the grave after a life of honest fame?*

There are names in all countries which may be denominated historical names, and, according to the nature of the events with which they are associated, bring disgrace or honour on the country that claims them; but the most of historico-political names of the semibarbarous ages are so associated with conspiracies, treasons, and rebellions, for personal objects, that the reputation which they have left is of a very doubtful nature.

But the business of this treatise is to deal with substances, and not with names. It will be seen, from what has been stated, that more than half of the entire peerage has been created since the beginning of the reign of George the Third, and indeed it may be said, from the year 1800. It is the most upstart hereditary legislative body in the world—ridiculously so; and it becomes a subject of the most curious speculation to inquire, how a few hundred individuals, without historical names or associations, should possess such an influence and power of taxation over the vast body of citizens, of whom they were lately members, distinguished chiefly for their hostility to their own class of society.

The truth is, the British peerage is a species of club, or political corporation, held together on the principles of Free-Masonry, and a person admitted into it, at once, and by instinct, acquires the spirit of the order. The number of the members being small, insures an extraordinary

* It is honourable, as it is gratifying, to know that in almost all countries, especially in this country, the names whose glory in literature and science will last through all ages, and shine on the countries that produced them, have belonged to citizens generally of the middle or lower classes of society.

degree of union, and, on any point touching the security or privileges of the order, the members are like a body animated by one soul. There is, however, fortunately for the great mass of the people, a division of opinion among the members of this political association, or, more properly speaking, the members cannot agree on the appropriation of offices of power, profit, and honour. This causes a competition for public power, by which the people are benefited. So far as opinion goes to support public men, offers of service are raised in amount by competitors to secure that opinion in their favour.

The power of the British aristocratic legislative body, lies in its enormous wealth, divided among a small number of persons. This wealth, through the medium of laws most cunningly devised, accumulates in a geometrical ratio, at the same time that the property of all other classes of society has a tendency to decrease, under the action of those laws. This power has acquired a strength and consistency, since the beginning of the reign of George the Third, unexampled in the history of the world, and which has been gained from the extraordinary advance of this country in manufactures and commerce, since the improvement of the steam-engine by James Watt. The application of that machinery, by Richard Arkwright, to the manufacture of cotton, was followed up successfully by other persons, among whom was Robert Peel, who promoted the interests of his country by his manufacturing enterprise, and laid up a princely fortune for his own family.

It will be found, that no interest in this country has increased in magnitude and value, so much as the property of the legislating class of the population, since the country has attained its height of manufacturing and commercial greatness; and for this reason—that the accumulation of

property by that class, was not accompanied or followed by the extraordinary drains to which the property of all other classes and interests has been exposed.

The increase of the population, and the extension of manufactures, have been signalized by the extraordinary outspread of cities and towns over large tracts of land formerly under the plough—hence an enormous addition to the wealth of a number of land-owners, who possess a hereditary power of making laws for their fellow-citizens. There is one family of this class, that is acquiring wealth from ground-rents in London, which promises to accumulate to an amount almost too great for a subject.

Let the people be assured of this, that if they are subject for other twenty years, to the operation of the laws as at present constituted, the children of thousands now in comfortable circumstances, will be beggars. It is a question of self-preservation—interesting to farmers, manufacturers, merchants, shipowners, bankers, professional men, and every grade of citizens, that the system of taxation in this country be changed in its principles and details, and the ruin arrested, by those enormous legislative accumulations of property being made subject to their fair share of the burdens of public debt and taxation.

There is a difficulty in forming a conception of the nature of the enormous power, exercised by the legislative aristocratic body in the British empire. This power is so concealed under the technical forms of law, that the people cannot easily detect its operation. It is a most refined despotism, suited to the intelligence of the people subject to its influence. The root of it is deeply imbedded in the soil of society, and has sprung up and acquired vigour, in proportion to the increased and growth of other parts of that society. This body is from the old stock that existed

in the dark feudal ages, but as the people gained strength, by their union in trading-boroughs, and became wealthy and influential, it lowered its pretensions, and accommodated itself to the altered circumstances of the country. It has been shown from what causes it acquired such extraordinary increase of power since the revolution of 1688.

It is again repeated here, that the design of these observations is not to encourage the attempts to annihilate the legitimate influence of the upper chamber of the legislature; it is maintained that the existence of two sections, independent of each other, in their functions of legislation, is absolutely necessary to the preservation of the liberties of the people. But it is asserted, that an improper and dangerous influence is exerted by it over the popular branch, so as to appear in an unfair principle adopted in fiscal laws for the great body of the people, and to create an interest in the support of a system of lavish expenditure of public funds, by the distribution of the money being through the hands of the party that exercises this control.

This hereditary legislative power rests on the law of primogeniture as its main support, and as the principle which gives perpetuity to it. This principle gives to the oldest branch of the family all the property in lands and houses, together with the station, rank, and titles, attached to the family or annexed to the property. This is the theory of the "law of the first born:" it implies the possession of all the real property by that fortunate individual, to the exclusion of all his brothers, and sisters, and other near relatives.

It therefore imparts a power to one person, founded on the control of the subsistence of many persons.

These members, shut out from the family estates, may be in possession of property of their own, but this does not

alter the case, as they may have acquired it from some source quite distinct from the hereditary lands or houses. As the average number of persons in a family, may be taken at five, including the parents, this will give two persons thrown destitute out of every family, in order that one be maintained in affluence on the death of the parent. But, as among the upper ranks of society, the mortality is less in childhood and youth than among classes exposed to greater privations, the average should be taken at more than five, and perhaps raised to seven or eight—four may be nearer the proportion of persons out of every family, thrown on the world through the operation of the law of the first-born.

Avarice refuses to partition the estate, but pride will not consent to allow members of the family to wander as beggars. Therefore something must be done to provide employment suitable to the dignity and pretensions of the name, and funds must be forthcoming to support them.

This explanation gives the key to the whole system of "*Church and State*," established in the British dominions, and for the maintenance of which the industrious population of these islands, have been compelled to make such extensive sacrifices. This is similar to what takes place in all other countries, with an Aristocracy, proud by the law of primogeniture, and poor from its consequences.

Mr. Bulwer, in his "*France*," affirms that "the impoverishment of the high Aristocracy threw thirty thousand noble paupers upon the community, for whom forty thousand places were created. Here was the formidable body united in the support of abuses, and connecting, if supported by the crown, those abuses with its majesty and prerogatives."*

* Bulwer's *France*, vol. ii. page 223.

It is not easy to say how many noble paupers are thrown on the British public. There are in the upper house of legislature, five hundred and fifty-eight members, including the archbishops and bishops. Of the second order of titles, there are about eight hundred baronets with hereditary rank; and then follow the various "grades of families, branches of the peerage. These are the direct claimants for offices and appointments in church, state, and army, for the second and third sons, nephews, and cousins: but in addition to these, there is a reserve of families, without title, but of great wealth, who tread on the front ranks so closely as to gall their kibes. The total number of families who thus press on the country, may be computed at from 3,500 to 4,000, and will give between five and six thousand elder sons to fill the seats of the House of Commons, and second sons and nephews for the army, and other employments of honour and profit. The three thousand commissions in the army are specially reserved for the connections of this class of society.* It has been maintained, and will be maintained, that this state of things is exactly as it ought to be, and that posts of dignity, honour, and profit, naturally belong to the upper or titled ranks of society. This is the state of things under an exclusive Aristocracy.

A despotic monarch exercises his judgment in the choice of officers, by selecting, from whatever class, persons offering the talents and integrity required for the employment.

In answer to these observations, an appeal will be made to every page of our history, as showing examples of persons from the most obscure stations raised to the first offices in the State.

* It was stated by a member of the House of Commons in the debate of 11th July 1842, that when he was in Canada there were, within eight miles, seventeen colonels of regiments; and in one regiment there were fifty officers, all of one family connection!

There is no denying this fact—that in almost every reign, there have been persons of the lowest origin seen in the most important situations under the crown. This is a subject which will be separately treated of, and with some attention; and in the mean time it will only be necessary to say, that such persons, before they reach the threshold of power, must have long professed the political creed of the dominant party; and on entering within the precincts of the court, must abjure all opinions in favour of the class from which they sprung, and pledge themselves to the interests of their employers.

However much these political adventurers may apply the flattering unction to their own minds, and however easily the people may be deceived and pleased by seeing one of their own number high in power, there can be no mistake that some of the bitterest enemies to popular privileges have risen from the ranks of the people. This circumstance may be explained on the principles of human nature.

A deserter, or an apostate, fights with desperate courage, goaded by the fear of falling into the hands of the party he has abandoned. The observers, or satirists of mankind, assert that an emancipated slave makes the cruellest task-master over his fellows.*

* This branch of the work is omitted. It is divided into two sections, one of which exposes the fallacy which is so prevalent among a certain class of persons, namely, that the proof of the freedom of our laws and of the equality and equity of our institutions, is to be found in the circumstance of all posts in the country being attainable by any man, if able and deserving, even from the lower ranks of people. Because we occasionally see an individual from humble origin filling the highest office in the State, it is therefore argued that our government is of a very popular character.

But what answer will be made, if we see precisely the same thing happen in the most despotic countries? In Turkey and Russia, slaves are raised to be generals and ministers of state. It is a matter of notoriety, that Napoleon

This subject is treated philosophically, and not as a mere political party-question, and in that spirit it is continued here.

The tendency of the hereditary principle, through the law of primogeniture, is to blunt parental and filial feelings, and to deaden the affections between the members of the same family. This is a matter of historical notoriety in the families of kings and princes, of all ages and nations. How many dark and bloody deeds stain the records of empires ! deeds prompted by impatience to govern, on the part of the next in succession—or by jealousy of his successors, on the part of the monarch. In Eastern and other semibarbarous countries, the bowstring, the poniard, or the poisoned goblet, have been familiar instruments in domestic revolutions.

In Christian countries, civilization has lent its aid to change customs and improve manners. Monarchs live to an extreme old age ; and the heir looks on the sceptre, held by the trembling hand of his sire, perhaps with impatience, but without a thought of grasping it before the time. In descending from the throne of the sovereign, to the dais of the noble, we shall perceive the same feelings pervading the breasts of the possessor and his progeny : and throughout the society where the law gives all to one, we shall find the affections between kindred injured by the unnatural arrangement. Impatience and jealousy, mutually alive between the present possessor and the expectant, a mixture of hatred and envy between the eldest of the family and the younger branches, may be supposed to exist.

raised any man fit for his purposes from the lowest situations to the highest ranks.

The second section treated of that wise governor and profound political economist, Sancho Panza, raised to the government of an island, affording lessons to people and governments.

Moses, for the great object of his dispensation, found it necessary to establish the law of primogeniture; but it would appear, that he was perfectly alive to the effect which it was likely to produce on the hearts of the Israelites—hence, no doubt, the motives for the severity of the following enactments:—"And he that curseth his father and his mother, shall surely be put to death;"* and even age was to be specially respected; "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God."†

It must be admitted, that the patience of expectants of the lands and titles of British peers is long tried. I have before me a list of the names of fifty-nine members of the House of Peers, living at the same time, the ages of whom are from seventy-two to ninety-two years each. That number is a little more than the tenth part of the whole number of the peers. This great age of such a large proportion of men, is very remarkable. In the population of England, the proportion of those above seventy years of age living at the same time, is not a twentieth part. But in some localities the proportion is much less, and in the dense manufacturing towns, there is a melancholy disparity. In Manchester, with a population of 192,000 souls, there were living in 1841, only 2891 men and women of seventy years and upwards—this is just equal to one and a half per cent. of the whole population.‡

It is well that practical conclusions, useful to the people of this country, should be drawn from such facts as these. There is an assembly of men, living beyond the usual period of human existence, in the enjoyment of every blessing which this world can afford, and in whose personal experience, except for gratification, hunger and thirst, cold

* Ex. xxi. v. 17. † Lev. ix. v. 32. ‡ See Facts and Figures, iv. p. 56.

and nakedness, distress and care, are all unknown, sitting as legislators for a population exposed at times to those evils in an intense degree, and without the means of alleviation. It is evident, that there can be no reciprocity of feeling, or sympathy, between a body of law-makers, such as described, and the masses of people whose interests, safety, and even existence, depend on their decisions. Many of these hereditary law-makers for the people of the British islands are alien in their tastes and habits, and their domestic servants are actually foreigners. And some of them, from their luxurious retreats in Italy or Turkey, will dictate, through their proxies at home, votes to tax the subsistence of the inhabitants of Manchester and Paisley! Hence the ignorance, and the hardness of feeling, so often displayed in a hereditary legislature, and opinions are sometimes uttered by men of great name, when discussing subjects of trade or fiscal arrangements, which excite pity or astonishment.

But if it be true, or even probable, that the law of primogeniture produces a deteriorating effect on the domestic affections of legislators, it need not cause surprise to find, in their proceedings towards the people, a harshness and selfishness; and there are, in the history and state of English aristocratic legislation, a cupidity, a meanness, and an hypocrisy, which are scarcely to be equalled in the laws of any other people. This is not vague assertion, or wild declamation, but it is demonstrated by the statistics of church-property and of public charities—by the evasion of just claims on land and other property belonging to the legislating class—by the state of mining laws, allowing the concealed existence of a species of slavery of women and children, compared with which, negro-bondage is a

state of ease and civilization; and, in fine, our statute-book, containing corn-laws, laws of prohibition of importation of animal food, bad poor-laws, and many other regulations, stand a beacon, to guide the electors of this country to a choice of men, to step forth to see that justice shall at length be done to the poor as well as rich. It is impossible, within the compass of a volume, to give a full catalogue of all the matters which require investigation, alteration, and amendment: all that can be done is merely to point to a few cases, containing the most reckless principles of confiscatory appropriation. Let the question be answered, how does it happen, that the people see in the school of Eton the sons of peers and of opulent families, in contravention of the original charter of that institution, for the education and maintenance of "seventy poor and indigent scholars?" This gross perversion of charity-funds in this instance, will just serve to lead the thoughts to a vast number of a similar nature.

But perhaps the most singular and disgusting exemplification of this spirit of rapacity, and of the desire to feed at the public expense, is to be found in the history of the Pension List of this country. Down to the reign of Queen Anne, in 1702, the sovereigns of England had the power of alienating the hereditary revenues; and in the early part of George III., the power of the Crown to grant pensions was wholly unrestrained, and in fact there were no limits but the discretion of the minister, and the necessities of the Civil List. In Ireland, the power was still more unlimited, both in the amount and the duration of the grant of public money, even extending to the injury of future sovereigns. In Scotland, down to 1810, the hereditary revenues were entirely at the mercy of the crown, and, as

might be imagined, these funds were very effectually managed by the ministers of the day, for political purposes. In 1782, the total amount stood thus :

English Pensions,	£85,000	In 1830,	£95,000
Irish do.	80,000	“	50,000
Scotch do.	133,000	“	25,000
<hr/>		<hr/>	
Total,	£298,000		£170,000

At present the total amount of the three classes is about £90,000.

The mere money-amount of pension is comparatively an insignificant object. The great evil lies in the pernicious principle, of a minister having the power and means to bribe and corrupt, and to provide for noble paupers at the expense of the industrious poor.* An inquiry into the pension list was opposed most vigorously every time that it was proposed, and nothing proved the rankness of the puddle more, than the anxious efforts of parties interested, that it should remain undisturbed. The question became a party one; and to say that, is to describe the importance which was attached to it. All the men called statesmen in parliament, took an active part in the debate; and on a subject of this nature, the leading men of both political parties generally concurred in opposing the motion for a revision of the pension list.

In 1836 there were 146 votes in favour of the revision, and 268 against it—showing a majority of 122 against the

* Since writing the text, the author has read in the debates in the House of Commons, on the 9th Feb 1843, on “the receipt and expenditure of the public money;”—“Sir James Graham had moved for returns in 1827 or 1828, and the country was astonished with the information then produced. By that return, they were informed, that 113 Privy Councillors received amongst them no less than £650,000 of the public money, per annum ”

investigation. But in eighteen months afterwards, a new light flashed on the minds of our legislators, for in December, 1837, the revision was voted in a House of 528 members, who divided—295 for, and 233 against, it.*

The pension question, and its results, are probably the most singular transactions in the annals of legislation, either ancient or modern. On the appointment of the committee of inquiry, the immediate result was the resignation by twenty-one persons ashamed of their pensions. Many of the persons were lords and ladies; and the sum saved was £3,700 a year, averaging each about £175. The total number of pensioners was 1303, of whom 781 were persons of title. Some *historical* names of great pretensions were on the list; and this contrast between the comparative insignificance of the sum and the high-sounding title, was in some cases strikingly ludicrous. But one pension of £3,000, granted by George IV. to an ex-minister was resigned by the receiver on the first attempt in 1836 to institute a revision.† The report of the committee is remark-

* Contrast this strong muster of men, legislating for pensions to poor relatives of peers, bishops, and other aristocratic individuals, with the indecent paucity of members present in the House of Commons on the night of the 21st March, 1842, when an enormous taxation was planned for the country. "No doubt the people of this country are looking with deep interest to this discussion, and watching our proceedings with strong anxiety, but to show the attention of the honourable gentlemen opposite, I can only say, that at 7 o'clock I counted the honourable members on the other side of the House, and found that only 23 were present. It is only fair also to add, that the number on this side was not much greater."—*Speech of Sir Robert Peel.*

† "My Lord,

Richmond Park, 15th Feb 1836.

"I request the favour of your lordship to lay before the King, with my humble duty, my resignation of the pension of £3,000 granted to me by his late most gracious majesty King George the Fourth.

"I have the honour to remain, &c.

"To Viscount Melbourne.

(Signed) "SIDMOUTH."

able for some of its recommendations, which appear fully to bear out the opinions already expressed on the tendency of primogeniture law, to blunt or destroy natural affection. One of the articles is as follows:—"Your committee feel it their duty to express their decided opinion, that where close relationship exists, and where means of support may be afforded, it is to family-connections, and not to the public purse, that application for relief should be made."* And the substance of another article is—"that in no case should poverty combined with hereditary peerage be considered ground of pension."† It would appear from these recommendations, that it was a practice of the peers to throw the maintenance of their poor relations on the public purse, filled in a great degree from the earnings of the industrious tradesman and the hard-working labourer, instead of supporting them from their own resources. The question is here left; and in these times of taxation and distress, it would be well for the people to reflect seriously on it, and make up their minds on some plan of permanent relief.

In considering the state of affairs in this country, it is not always best to enter into minute details, in order to form correct ideas of the relation of one thing to another. A few strong facts should be placed in contrast, and circumstances brought into position—so that the light and effulgence from one may be made to fall on the darkness of another—not in expectation that this light thus shed will cheer or dispel the gloom, but only to disclose to the

* Report of Select Committee of House of Commons, 24th July, 1838

† This selfish and unnatural feeling in the upper ranks has a bad effect on the ignorant and unreflecting portion of our humble countrymen, and causes them to associate together the ideas of rank and pension. The silly-witted peasant who found his way by some chance into the interior of Windsor Palace in August, 1842, when questioned, said "that he was a lord, and came to the Queen for his pension."

world the horrors of the scene. Bring the light which springs from the schools of Eton, Harrow, and Winchester, and that enlightens the youth of the powerful and affluent, to enter for a moment the coal-mines of this country, and show to mankind a heathen darkness in a Christian land. In these mines, many of the children and youths employed do not know that there is a God, and never heard of Jesus Christ; and yet the wealth of some of the most aristocratic families is chiefly derived from those sources.* The riches and the learning of Oxford and Cambridge are devoted to the support and enlightenment of a favoured few. Persons who profit by these things will say, that these and similar establishments belong to the class of society that enjoys them, and why should this class forego the use of them? The answer is, they did *not* originally belong to them, but that they have been diverted from the original intention. Funds, which were originally assigned for the education of masses of people, are employed for the instruction of a few, to acquire the knowledge and the art to keep in darkness and misery, the very people who have the right of inheritance.

In investigating such subjects, the mind, as it were, recoils from the audacity of the frauds committed, and from the enormity of the deception. The participators in, and the abettors of this system, affect surprise, pity, horror, and dread, at the ignorance and the debasement of great masses of our population, huddled together in cities and towns. Let them answer before heaven and earth, what has been done to educate and improve those millions of beings

* See the Report and Evidence of the Commissioners appointed by Her Majesty to inquire into the state of the mines in Great Britain and Ireland, which contain the description of a condition of society altogether extraordinary in such a country as this.

of a noble race? Is it not recorded, that only the other day the sum of thirty thousand pounds was voted for the expense of public education in Great Britain; and, as if to attract the attention of the world to the niggardness of spirit which assigned such a sum for such a purpose, a supplementary grant of ten thousand pounds was added a few days afterwards—making forty thousand pounds, for the education of the eighteen millions of souls in England and Scotland!* The kings of Belgium and Hanover receive a larger sum, to encourage them to form treaties and raise certain rates of duties prejudicial to the commercial interests of this country!†

Ireland, to be sure, receives £50,000 for her education. And the emancipated negroes receive £49,000 for their instruction, and for the support of liberated Africans. No person will grudge the money appropriated to these objects of charity to the negroes. But what sort of economy is that, and to what will it tend, which gives liberally to one secondary class of British subjects, and denies to, or almost denies, the means of common instruction to the population at home? On the plainest arithmetical principles of fair play, the labouring classes are entitled to consideration:—

* In the daily newspapers the eye is attracted occasionally by prominent notices of sums of £20 and £50, subscribed by individuals of rank and wealth to funds for establishing a school here, and another there, for the education of the children of the poor. It is a disgrace to the nation, and to the age, that such an important business is left to private feeling and sympathy.

† This remark refers to the treaty that was negotiated with the King of Hanover, for the composition of certain duties on British vessels and merchandise entering the rivers of that country. If we remember correctly, the uncle of our sovereign did all that he could to drive a bargain for doubling the duties on our commerce. With respect to the King of Belgium, he appears to divide his political and commercial affections very much between the country of his living father-in-law and that of his former wife. But thro' Clarendon, and £18,000 to £50,000 a year, *we* ought to secure him.

the taxation on their articles of food and drink amounts to a considerable part of the revenue of the empire; and were they to come to an understanding, and resolve to abstain for one year from the use of articles which are of a pernicious nature, many noble persons would at the end of the year be short of their pensions from the Treasury.

Our people are said to be addicted to drinking; but is there any very ardent desire in the government to check this disposition, while a ninth part of the gross revenue of the country is derived from a duty on 21,000,000 gallons of home-made spirits, besides spirits of foreign manufacture. A system is here under consideration, and the influence of that system on the conduct of individuals is noticed, and reflecting on the whole of its tendency it may be pronounced, that except by pressure from without, drunkenness, ignorance, and demoralization among our people, will be permitted to continue, rather than taxes should be laid on land and other property of the legislating class of the population.

It is the nature of aristocratic bodies to assume a high tone, which is shown in the titles and decorations of the individuals composing the order. A constant endeavour is kept up, to impose on all who are not received into the order, a belief that it would be unsafe to the community to allow any encroachment on its privileges, and that the members of the order are the proper and only persons to be intrusted with power, and to fill situations of profit and honour. The facts, which have been adduced in the course of this work, and the tendency which has been shown to encroachments on the property and rights of others by dominant bodies in the country, must be left to make their impressions against the assumptions and dashing claims of such parties.

The great aristocratic party is divided into two factions, who, on some points, are opposed in principle, but generally only differ in degree on questions of the most vital importance to the vast majority of the people. The difference is chiefly perceived in the opinions of the party that struggles to supplant the other in possession of the government. In speeches in and out of parliament, and in the paid organs of the daily press, offers are made for the public favour, and promises of improved measures are freely proffered, to secure the suffrages of electors. One party generally bids higher than the other; but for the last one hundred and fifty years, the reforms which have been carried through for the benefit of the popular cause have been the result of the persevering endeavours of the people themselves, to frighten the legislature into measures of improvement.

But, as the real state of our fiscal regulations has evidently never been understood, the most crying evil of all is still in existence, namely, the heavy and unequally distributed load of taxation. However, the attention of the people is now awakened to this subject, and is sure to lead to a great change in the system. Were it not for the activity and intelligence of the people, acting incessantly upon the legislature and the government, it would be of very little importance whether the few hundred men denominated Tories, or the like number called Whigs, were in possession of the keys of the Treasury. They both agree in keeping up the system as it exists, and neither will consent to touch with a pruning hand the tree of withering influence on the industry of the country. One section of the dominant class represents more of the opinions of the dark ages than the other, and, if left entirely to itself, would crush all under its iron rod. The other section professes more liberality, and it claims the merit of those changes which have contributed to the freedom of the nation, but it

stops midway; and after a move, always appears alarmed that it has advanced so far. It forgets that it is impelled by a power that it cannot withstand. The two aristocratic parties, in their struggles for ascendancy, go the utmost lengths in vituperation of each other, and, besides expressing scorn and contempt, have recourse to measures to injure in public estimation the characters of their opponents, which would in private individuals be intolerable, and indeed would exclude the perpetrators from the rules of society.

A want of principle in public men, is now so general as really to shock the moral feelings of the country, and if the good sense of the people do not come to the rescue, a complete demoralization is not far off, which will assuredly be followed by anarchy. "It deserves to be noted, that every discussion upon questions of a high moral, religious, or social importance, which has yet taken place under the auspices of the Conservative government, has exhibited the strictest identity of view between the members of that government and their predecessors. As a fact it is undeniable, that statesmen, who, but a short time since either abetted or at least did not check, the outcry of their friends and supporters against measures which were then stigmatized as immoral, irreligious, anti-social, and unconstitutional, are now the most zealous and eloquent maintainers of those same measures, and the principles on which they are founded. Whatever may constitute the difference between the political sect of Sir Robert Peel, and that of Lord John Russell, it is clear that it does not consist in the possession by the former of any theory or code of practice, or rule of expediency as to matters of this nature, which was unknown to, or disregarded by, the latter. There is an end of that dream for ever."*

* From the leading article of the Times, 18th July, 1842.

The reform of the system of representation, in the year 1832, by adding about five hundred thousand persons to the electoral body, altered the balance of parties; but, as that measure was concocted and passed into law before the new constituencies could be brought into action, it has turned out a deception on the expectations of the people; and from the extent to which corrupt practices, undue influence, and intimidation have been carried by the two alternately dominant parties, the country finds itself in a worse position than before the enactment of that law. Before the year 1832, nobody was deceived by the system, for it stood forth in all its hideousness to the gaze of the public; but since then, a new drapery has been thrown over the hideous object, that, more concealed, still stands in the way of the progress of the nation. Without having raised the bulk of the people in the scale of political influence, it has had the effect of bringing the two factions of the aristocratic class into a position to approximate and coalesce. The foregoing extract from the *Times* newspaper, the organ of political parties, describes the similarity of action, and the affinity of principle of the two parties, when either is in actual possession of the government.

Matters must very soon cure themselves, for the people will not long tolerate an order of things, to promote the interests or gratify the ambition of a few scores of public men, who doff the world aside—in parliament, laugh at principle, and out of it, at the people—and who audaciously parade the youthful sovereign before her allies and royal foreign guests, as the approver of schemes, which to the world have the semblance of national resolutions, but for their narrowness of principle, and for the meanness of their details, are unworthy of the acceptance of a great nation.

In the middle of the year 1841, the two factions came in

collision—or, as history will probably write it, in collusion—on measures to relieve the distresses of the country. The misery that is rapidly spreading, and daily increasing, through the many millions of our population dependent for subsistence on manufactures and commerce, is a matter of fearfully melancholy notoriety. For many years past the attention of every person in the country, high and low, has been directed towards this subject, and in the months of May and June of the year mentioned, the government proposed to the legislature, certain plans of reform in our commercial and fiscal laws, which, it was believed, would remove the causes of the distress of the people, and arrest the progress of decadence, into which several important interests were falling. So many tons weight of paper have been consumed in the written and printed statements of details of these matters, that it is not my intention to do more than give a broad sketch of the subject.

The government that contemplated the improvement of the commercial code, had to yield its ground. It failed by its want of tact in concerting and carrying through its measures; it threw itself, all of a heap, in the teeth of the whole system of monopoly in the country; it so contrived its plans, as to meet at once the opposition of every body and every person who had an interest in the maintenance of laws of prohibition, or of high duties on articles of food. The failure had a good deal of the appearance of a wish to be beaten on the questions submitted for discussion. The parliament was dissolved—the election of another took place—or, as is proved by subsequent proceedings, the mockery of an election was performed. The Sovereign opened in person the session of the new parliament, with the more than ordinary splendour of the presence of her royal gossip, His Majesty the King of Prussia, who must

have imagined, that some state questions of the very deepest importance, were to be taken into consideration by the national council, assembled with such unusual solemnity. He will in due time become acquainted with particulars; and, in the mean while, he may be informed, that, as affected the sovereign of this country, the only measure that was passed, was to protect her person from street vagabonds, disposed to fire pistols at her.

As interested the people, the result was an alteration of the law imposing duties on corn; the imposition of a duty on live cattle for food;* the lowering of the duty on puddings and sausages from fourpence to threepence a pound; the raising the duty on apples to sixpence a bushel; the introduction of potatoes into the national tariff to be charged a duty of twopence sterling the hundred weight. These and several other curious modifications of the tariff were the result of the legislative deliberations, crowned by a tax on the income of the people.†

The two great aristocratic parties were at issue on the quantity of food to be allowed as rations to the British and Irish people: they differed in the degree, or scale, according to which the subsistence of the people was to be measured; in other words, they disputed about, the *elements of their political power*. In the month of June 1841, this power rested on certain laws of prohibition or taxation of

* Respecting live cattle, the change was from absolute prohibition to a duty of so much a head on importation from foreign countries. But it was not without opposition that the alteration was effected, and one legislator, anxious that the people should be taxed according to the exact weight of the beasts, made a motion that "the duties on all live stock imported for food should be taken by weight," but Mercy weighed down the scale in favour of a fixed duty on each beast imported, whether fat or lean.

† On looking carefully over the new tariff, although there were a great many alterations, it will be found that little real substantial relief was afforded by it to the necessities of the country.

foreign food. The various species of farinaceous grain for the food of man and animals, were subjected to a curiously contrived machinery, which, like some of those scientific instruments, such as rain-gages or gasometers, measured the exact proportion of wheat, barley, oats, rye, pease, beans, maize, buckwheat, bigg, oatmeal, flour from wheat, and other sorts of meal, to be introduced into this country at certain rates of duty; but on any tendency to a plentiful supply of grain-food within the country, the rate of duty was to rise, and at one point the duty became a perfect prohibition. It was only at a famine price, when danger stared us in the face, that the duty dwindled down to a rate of humanity. The story is told of certain philosophers, and of men of extremely delicate health, who lived by rule, and who had their food measured by weight—men who, in fact, lived by the ounce and by the dram. Such in principle are the famous corn-laws of the British empire; they assume a certain standard for the national digestion, and weigh out the food with the scrupulosity of a Cornaro or an Abernethy. Next came articles of animal food, and these were absolutely prohibited into the country; namely, oxen, cows, calves, sheep, lambs, swine, hogs, sucking-pigs, fresh beef, corned beef, fresh pork, salmon, and soles. No weights or measures were required here. No ox was allowed to bellow, no sheep to bleat, no grunt was heard from a hog, or a squeak from a pig; fresh beef was proscribed, and no foreign salmon were permitted to display their silvery sides in the stalls of Billingsgate. Touching the articles of animal food, it would appear as if Brahma, Mahomet, or Peter the Hermit, had dictated these British laws of prohibition. After these followed all other articles which enter into the mouth of man, and on these the fiscal clutches of the law fell tenaciously.

Bread and butter generally go together, and if the first was prohibited, it was a matter of indifference how high the duty on the last was charged; butter was therefore taxed at $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ per lb.; bacon was, for some reason or other, charged at $3d.$ per lb., and eggs to fry with at $10d.$ per 120; lard for the same mess was charged at the rate of 8s. the cwt.; cheese was charged 10s. a cwt. and onions to flavour it at 3s. per bushel. After these articles of primary necessity, came those almost considered indispensable articles, such as, sugar, tea, coffee, cocoa; wine, and other luxuries and comforts may be added, to complete the list of enormously taxed articles of consumption. Out of the innumerable items used in modern commerce, the only articles which were allowed perfect freedom of entry were bullion and diamonds—turbot and lobsters! Now, bullion and diamonds have no relationship to turbot and lobsters, such as the connection between bread and butter. The many hundred thousand families to whom the eatables would be most welcome, have nothing to do, even in thought, with the jewels and precious stones.

With regard to the fish, there is something more than meets the eye; the very principle of the navigation-laws was broken through, in favour of these articles of food. Every other sort of fish was prohibited to be imported in foreign vessels, or even foreign-caught fish brought into port in British craft. It would appear as if the safety of the monarchy depended on turbot and lobsters;—lobsters are to turbot, what eggs are to bacon, for turbot requires lobster sauce, and these form such savoury dishes for aristocratic palates! but eels could not slide through the fingers of the law-makers, but were taxed by the ship-load at £13; and if there were only a basket-full on board, it was to be charged, it is presumed, as a cargo or lading.

As we are approaching the grand finale, it is proper to give these details, in order that a correct opinion may be formed of the question, which is now occupying the thoughts of the great and noble of the land. Hunger and misery have driven the labouring classes in the manufacturing districts into insurrection; and can any person of rational mind be surprised at such a state of things under laws which tax *every mouthful* of food, except turbot and lobsters!

It is strange that this country should find in Russia and Mexico, prototypes or imitators of her policy; but so it is. These two nations are contrasts to each other in many particulars; but it will be admitted on all hands, that neither can be held forth as a model for this country. Each has, round all its borders, planted the standard of seclusion from intercourse with civilized people. The world knows what Russia has been, what she is—but no one can predict what she will be. Mexico, with a churlish temper refuses to admit the commerce of England, France, and other nations, or only admits it on conditions which neutralize the benefit. She wants to make herself a manufacturing country, and fixes her tariff accordingly; but foreign cotton, in any shape, is to her an abomination—the raw material is prohibited, and cotton yarn is charged with a prohibitive duty. In articles of food, the spirit of monopoly rages, and *absolute* prohibition of introduction is passed on the following articles:—Wheat, and all kinds of grain and seed, wheat, flour, rice, sugar of all sorts, coffee, molasses, common salt, starch, aniseed, and salted pork. The Mexicans are a singular people. About twenty years ago, they borrowed large sums of money of wealthy and credulous citizens of this country, and after a suspension of the payment of interest, and a state of insolvency for many years, a people

in possession of the richest silver and gold mines in the world, are now paying dribbling instalments to account of their debt! The author of these pages, from a residence of several years, retains many agreeable reminiscences of that interesting country, and, with a desire for its welfare, he points out what he conceives to be a fatal error in its policy.

One party in England wishes to deceive itself into the belief, that the distresses of the country are only of a temporary nature, or from causes different from laws restrictive of food. It so happens, that several circumstances have met, about the same time, to aggravate the distress by deranging, and in some cases almost destroying, certain branches of trade. But statistical facts are very stubborn things, and there is the melancholy proof from them, of a change in the proportions and relations of things, which denote a decadence, or increasing debility, in the national resources. It is established, that within the last twenty years, the increase of the population has been in a less ratio than during the previous twenty years—and also that the rate of mortality has increased on the average of the population. But in the analysis of the returns, it is found, that the decrease of people, and the increase in the rate of mortality, have fallen among classes exposed to the depression of trade, and to the scarcity and dearness of food.—“When, therefore, we consider that these causes have increased the proportional number of deaths in England, at least 10 per cent. since 1820, and $4\frac{3}{10}$ per cent. during the last year alone, and in some counties upwards of 19 per cent. in the one period, and 25 in the other;—it surely becomes a matter of the gravest importance to ascertain whence they have arisen, and how their recurrence may be prevented; and it is also a subject of solemn and anxious inquiry for our statesmen, how it is

that in England alone, mortality should be upon the increase, while in all other civilized countries the duration of human life is steadily improving.”* These are fearful facts, and the men who have legislated for this great country for these last forty years, must answer for them.†

In confirmation of this state of decay, it has been emphatically announced in the House of Commons, by the head of the present government, that the country has now reached the limit, and in some cases has passed the limit, of endurance of taxation on consumption.‡ This announcement forms a condensed but conclusive commentary on the whole of the doctrine inculcated in this work—that taxes on consumption are the causes of the miserable destitution of millions of our population.

With this knowledge of the real state of the country, what have the two aristocratic political parties proposed and done for the relief of the people? and what has been the grand result of a change of government, and the attendant suspense and anxiety of every individual in the nation? In June, 1841, the party in power proposed a fixed duty of 8s. on the quarter of foreign wheat; and after a year's consideration, the opposite party passed a law fixing a scale of duty, the average or medium of which is just about 10s. 4d. a quarter. In this greatest of all evils, the tax on bread, the difference between the two great political par-

* Facts and Figures, No. vi. page 93

† On the decay of physical strength of a people—"Since the strength of a nation does not consist in the mere numbers of its population, but on the relative number of those who are of age and strength for labour, the above recorded deterioration of physical strength, and also abridgment of the duration of life, which we advisedly attribute to adverse sanatory circumstances, are to be viewed with the deepest concern"—*Times*, 31st Aug. 1842.

‡ See Report of Sir Robert Peel's speech in the House of Commons, March 11, 1842,

ties, is TWO SHILLINGS and FOURPENCE on a quarter of wheat !

Such is the result of the struggles among the most powerful and haughty aristocracy in any nation of the world ; and the descendant of a line of kings has been brought out to give legal force to the magnificent act—and let the world know, that turbot is now taxed at the rate of one halfpenny a pound !

In this work, principles are grappled with, and systems are attacked ; but principles and systems can only be beneficial or dangerous through the agency of men. In case that it be thought, that there has been too much severity displayed towards the members of the British Aristocracy, the following observations, made by two leading organs of political discussion, are extracted. They are from the London *Times* and *Standard* newspapers. The first is on the want of knowledge, by the peers, of the circumstances of the people, and their want of sympathy with the middle classes.

“ Their lordships, we must be allowed to say, whatever may be their individual and collective sagacity, dignity, and integrity, are not real and experimental judges of the painful effects of a tax upon trades and professions—that is to say, upon human industry, in its countless and varying applications. Still less can they appreciate the odious inquisition, by which such a tax on industry will be accompanied. To say nothing of certain other advantages which the members of that house already possess, a peer’s income is easily got at—his estate is known—its rent is known—and the duty on the mortgage, wherever such exists, may be at once deducted by his own agent from the interest payable. He has to dread no exposure—to produce no

ledger—to undergo no cross-examination, and can hardly be supposed to understand the annoyance, and even danger, which will arise to others, from such vexatious interferences with the course of their business.” *

It is now quite sufficient time that they should experience some of the effects of taxation, and those inconveniences which they have so long inflicted on the rest of the citizens.

The following is an account of their want of sympathy with the labouring classes in mines and other works, and of their indifference to the comforts of the poor in workhouses; and is extracted from the London “Standard” of 8th August, 1842:—“The course taken has been indeed a most unfortunate one for the House of Lords. It has deprived that house of much of the opinion of sympathy with the labouring classes, to which it is in no small degree indebted for its safety during the political tempests of the last twenty years, completing almost the fatal work which the too favourable reception of the new poor-law had begun. There is an opinion rapidly gaining ground among the people, that the happiness of the masses, their liberties, and their morals, are all to be sacrificed to the augmentation of the wealth of the rich. Up to the late disastrous proceedings in the House of Lords, it was hoped that the nobility of the land would oppose themselves to the course of injustice, and, ultimately, of national ruin.

“It was hoped that, contented with the wealth they enjoy, and the honours connected with that wealth, they would not, at least, descend to the level of mill-owners and corn-regraters, in extorting more wealth from the wants and anguish of their fellow-creatures.

“Must we say how bitterly this hope has been disap-

* Leading article of *The Times*, of 16th March, 1842, on Lord Brougham’s ninth Resolution on Income Tax.

pointed, and how seriously the House of Lords has damaged itself by the disappointment of its truest friends? Opinion governs everything in a free country, and character is every thing under the government of opinion ;—but will any one say that the character of the House of Lords stands where it did three months ago—where it did seven years ago—above all, where it did when the ever-to-be-honoured Earl of Eldon exercised the chief influence in its decisions?—It is well occasionally to make such retrospects. The monarchy will fall when the House of Lords will fall; but the House of Lords *will* fall when it shall lose the respect of the country. Is the house losing or gaining in public esteem? We put it to the members of the house themselves.”*

The house destroyed the humane principles contained in Lord Ashley’s bill for the regulation of coal-mines in possession of the chief members of the House of Lords; and it was on this occasion that he made his celebrated and melancholy observation—“*that he must sacrifice the children, to save the women.*”†

“Another joint-stock emigrating bubble has just exploded, to the infinite injury of some scores of honest and industrious mechanics, and to the serious loss of many tradesmen. More pompous and inflated—and, we add, more suspicious—advertisements and prospectuses, were

* As the “*Standard*” is one of the staunchest supporters of what is called the *Tory Party*, the passage cited does honour to its candour and manly feeling.

† A geologist, in pursuit of his studies, explored some of the mines, where he was horror-struck at the scenes that he beheld, and, on his reaching the surface of the earth, despatched a petition to the parliament for inquiry into the system; and hence, I believe, is the origin of the commission appointed to investigate the state of the coal-mines. The noble owners, and the bishops of the district, were either ignorant of the facts, or they concealed them.

never issued by any company than by the British American Association, located in the vicinity of Blackfriars-bridge. The entire peerage and baronetage of the United Kingdom seemed to have united their wealth and their wits in the scheme issued by this association. Yet it will doubtless be now discovered, that a few needy projectors were the 'be all' and the 'end all' of this precious plot to turn a penny.*

We cannot be indifferent to the opinions of foreigners towards us; and the following are from a French paper:—"Are we to trace in this state of public feeling the beginning of the decline of English power? Should this prognostic be correct, the world would soon forget the sorrow felt at the death of Sir William Macnaghten and his companions in Affghanistan; for the humiliation and overthrow of the British oligarchy would be productive for mankind of the greatest blessings."† The writer calls us "the most ambitious and greedy aristocracy in the world."

An American, writing on the question at issue between Great Britain and the United States, says, "No particular devotion to Great Britain animates the writer of these paragraphs. That country, great in her power—great in her intellect—great in her achievements—is controlled by a haughty aristocracy, which has never shown regard or sympathy for our republic. Our institutions are repugnant to them, and they manifest their dislike both in their official and private intercourse. So long as the government remains in their hands—so long as this people are animated by these feelings—so long will dislike and distrust chill all the relations between two countries, which by blood and language are bound so closely together.‡

* From the leading article of the "*Morning Herald*," of 2d November 1842.

† *Times*, 15th March, 1842.

‡ *Times*, April 1, 1842.

It is evident that almost every civilized nation on the globe is turning against this country, and a bitterness of national and individual feeling is every day becoming stronger against us, in consequence of the pretensions and rapacity of the governing power. And why should the people of this country lose the sympathy of mankind in this manner, and be considered unfit for the social compact of nations ! Whenever there is the appearance of the popular cause gaining strength in this country, the affections of the people of other nations are attracted towards us. Let the British and Irish people hold out the right hand of fellowship to their fellow-men, and the world will become the better for the union.

CHAP. IV.

THE DISTURBING FORCES OF ARISTOCRATIC POWER, IN THE ECONOMY OF SOCIETY.

DEVOURING PRINCIPLES—POLITICAL ECONOMY MUST FIRST MOVE PERSONS BEFORE IT CAN APPLY ITS PRINCIPLES—THE POLITICAL PART OF THE SCIENCE IS NECESSARY—DISTURBING FORCES IN SOCIETY—COUNTERACTING FORCES—THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF SMITH, M'CULLOCH, AND CHALMERS—PRINCIPLES OF TAXATION LAID DOWN BY SMITH—STEAM POWER IS THE EXPANSION OR ENLARGEMENT OF LABOUR—DR CHALMERS' ECONOMICS OF "LIMITATIONS"—HIS OPINION ADVERSE TO RESTRICTIONS ON THE CORN-TRADE.*

In an island of the ocean, there was a school or society of young persons of both sexes, of various ages, and of different capacities corporeal and mental. This little society was in itself a fair representation, in miniature, of a

* This and the following chapter were written after the reading of "Political Economy in connection with the Moral State and Moral Prospects of Society," by Thomas Chalmers, D. D. Professor of Divinity in the University of Edinburgh. That work is the production of a man of great fame as a divine, and a writer on economical subjects appertaining to the condition of the British nation. it appeared at a time when a great change was on the point of completion in the political circumstances of the country, and it contains the well-weighed opinions of the author on questions which in the present day are engaging the attention of every person, and exciting a degree of interest never before experienced in this country. The humble individual who presumes to pass a review on that work of Dr. Chalmers, applies to the subject the plain sense which a little observation of the world has afforded him.

large national community. The members of it had their respective tasks to perform, and duties to discharge, and the efficiency and willingness with which they accomplished them, were remarked by all observers. A more orderly, docile, and well-disposed society, scarcely any other parish could present. Withal, the members of it were very spirited, whenever any encroachments were made by other societies, and they defended themselves like little heroes on such occasions. There were three cakes, of different materials and of sufficient bulk for the whole community, to be shared at stated periods among the members, in portions according to the sex, age, and strength of each; and extra-allowances were to be made for meritorious conduct. But a certain part of these cakes was cut off, and retained as a fund from which to reward persons, who were employed to prevent strangers from disturbing the society, to keep the premises in good repair, and to preserve order. The cakes were kept in the possession of three individuals belonging to the society, and the distribution made by them to the various classes composing it. It is not necessary to relate where or in what way these three persons became possessed of the cakes, and of the power of apportioning them to the members or citizens. It is sufficient to state, that they stood in the relation of, and were considered trustees for, the society, and they took upon themselves the charge of making rules for, and of instructing, their associates.

After a time, a very great change took place in the circumstances and appearance of the different sections of the small community. The most of the members fell off in flesh, became pale and sickly; and it was remarked by observers, that they waited impatiently for the hours of distribution of cake; and tears were seen to start in the eyes of the weaker and younger people on receiving their allow-

ances, which diminished in size day after day; although it was observed that the portion retained as a reserved fund, was still of its original magnitude. What made the change more striking was, the contrast in the condition of the mass of the little citizens, and the trustees and their friends. The latter became sleek and plump, and saucy withal; for whenever the great numbers, who received their short allowances, were disposed to complain of their treatment, the managers were harsh and irritable, and threatened to send the officers to punish the complainants.

Notwithstanding this unhandsome behaviour on the part of the holders of the cakes, the young citizens bore up with great patience and courage, to the admiration even of the trustees and their favourites. There was something so peculiar in the condition and circumstances of this little community, as to attract the attention to it of the minister of the parish, and of many schoolmasters and learned persons of the neighbourhood; and in the school itself there were daily discussions on the causes of the distress, and on remedies for it. Philosophers, mathematicians, and other learned men, devoted their time and applied all their abilities to the investigation of the causes of this state of matters; and the most ingenious plans were proposed for the amelioration of the condition of the sufferers. The locality was examined and accurately measured, the dwellings were surveyed, the numbers of the inmates were ascertained, and their proportion of sexes, ages, and sizes. But the most close attention was fixed on the three cakes. The first was called "subsistence," the second "employment," and the third "capital." The respective weights were nicely fixed—the contents of each cake were analyzed—the plums were not only weighed, but even counted—and all the other ingredients measured and weighed with a

nicety which told well for the painstaking disposition of the investigators. After the three cakes had been accurately brought by calculation to their respective standards, then followed the most abstruse computations of the share which ought to fall to each individual. Volume upon volume was written on these subjects, and many more volumes will be written, until the world becomes convinced of the truth, that the holders in trust have held the cakes, and have eaten them too! This illustration will serve for an opening to this part of our subject.

The branches of knowledge comprised in what is called the science of Political Economy, have been very generally studied within the last sixty years. Adam Smith's celebrated work has been the text-book; and the events which have issued out of steam-machinery, and the consequences of the great American and French revolutions, have formed a sort of commentary on that text.

But all the principles of political economy, however veritable, will have no effect in bettering the condition of the multitude, unless possession be gained of the cakes, or control of the individuals who retain them in their power. Political economy is therefore a system which has more to do with persons than principles. In this system, or science, you must first influence or coerce persons, before you can apply principles in the affairs of a country. "Things which are equal to the same thing, are equal to one another," is an axiom that very often will be denied by the possessors, or holders, of the cakes of a country. There is no fallacy, no imposture, no fraud, however gross, that will not sometimes be supported and justified by the individuals who profit by them. It matters not what rank these individuals hold, or what high-sounding titles they

assume, they will crawl down from the one, or will lower the other, in order to secure for their own enjoyment the cakes and ale of the laborious citizens.

There are certain powers in nature which act on objects either as favouring or disturbing forces, according to the direction taken. One of the most extraordinary, is that described by astronomers. It appears from their calculations, that the great globe itself, in its circuit through space, is perceptibly affected by the attracting influence of the other heavenly bodies moving round the sun. We thus have the earth on which we exist, exposed to a disturbing force; and on its surface, every breeze that blows, and every current that runs, either aids or disturbs objects on their course. The currents of rivers, or the tides of the ocean, either speed the vessel on its way, or disturb and stop it. Winds do the same; and when they cross, obliquely or directly, the path of a missile in its flight, a deviation is caused from the right line. In archery and gunnery, allowance must be made for the strength and direction of the wind. One force can be made to neutralize another, and a favourable wind will propel a vessel against the current of the river or the ocean.

We must bring these analogies into human affairs. In the concerns of life, the *PASSIONS* of men are the favouring or disturbing forces, and in politics and political economy they must never be lost sight of in calculating the results of actions. History is the description of what takes place among men in society; and after the glowing colours used in the picture have been removed, it will exhibit scarcely anything else but avarice, injustice, and ambition, or love of power, practised by the few over the multitude. Supposing that this be true, it may be said that it is proving too much, as it will follow that this state of things is

the regular order of nature, and it therefore becomes a vain attempt to change it; and mankind, to the end of time, will be the victims sacrificed to avarice, injustice, and ambition. But there are counteracting influences to these passions of ruling men, who must by necessity yield their ground to the classes whom they oppress, as soon as these classes acquire knowledge of what is for their true interests, and are united and determined to enforce it. The middle classes of this country are a very different sort of people from their forefathers, who, only so late as about four hundred years ago, were admitted to the privilege of possessing lands; and the labouring classes in the present day are demigods, compared with the slavish serfs of the middle ages.

At no period of the history of the world, have men had fair play allowed them, and full scope to exert their activities; but, on the contrary, in all countries and ages, they have been cabined, cribbed, and confined within limits, both in limbs and mind. The very principles of society have remained concealed, or, if discovered, were not brought into beneficial action. It would almost appear, that one part of the design of the Mosaic and Christian dispensations has been overlooked in the affairs of men. Nature prompts, and Moses and Christ impose, the duty of providing for sufficient subsistence, and for decent houses and raiment. It ought to be considered a religious obligation on all men, to improve their condition, as a mark of gratitude to the Being who so bountifully places on the earth materials for so doing. A man who has the opportunity, and neglects to profit by it, and leaves those dependent upon him in a state of indigence, is declared to be worse than a heathen; and this applies to the mutual relation between rulers and the governed. The time has now come, when the chords in men's bosoms must be struck, so as to

rouse them from a lethargy, which is sinking them into degradation. If laws be found oppressive, and calculated to retain the people in poverty and ignorance, it becomes a duty, binding on the consciences of men, to get the laws repealed or amended.

The fact recorded on every page of the history of the human species, of power and large masses of property being in the hands of a fractional number of the population governing the majority, proves that mankind are, in the mass, docile and honest. Such being the case, it is avarice and cowardice only that dictate the libels on human nature, that multitudes are prone to destruction—"Human nature is not a tiger which needs a constant chain. In this case, it is the chain which makes the tiger. It is the oppressor who has made man fit only for the yoke."*

Mankind have remained so long in this unequal condition, that it may be affirmed that custom has become second nature with them. Why they have been allowed for so many thousand years, to remain in this condition of ignorance and inaction, can only be met by another question—Why those discoveries of science and inventions of art, which have such a wonderful influence on the physical and moral state of man, were not earlier made and perfected?

A vague idea very generally prevails, that the great mass of the population of a country can only be improved in physical condition, and raised in the scale of political gradation, by a corresponding diminution of the means, and lowering of the influence, of the classes of society already in possession of property and power. There is a great fallacy in this notion. In a fairly balanced, and well-regulated community, the proportions would be preserved. If the substratum be raised, every object on the surface would be

* Channing on the Present Age, p. 16.

raised at the same time. The monarch of a civilized and powerful nation of the present day is of a necessity an individual infinitely more enlightened and intellectual than his rude ancestor who was expert in the use of his sword, but could scarcely write his own name. But the living king directs the power of a people of educated freemen! So it is with all the several orders or classes of society.

Another illustration may be taken from the lowest rank of the people. Suppose that a change were to take place in England of so happy a nature, as to enable the pauper-class of the population, at present maintained by the payers of poor rates, to gain their own subsistence by their labour. Here is a portion of the society raised at once from being paupers, and consequently a burden upon a class of industrious citizens, to the rank of independent labourers. Would the circumstances of the rate-payers be damaged, or would their legitimate influence be lowered, by the change? By no means. The small tradesman who had to contribute to the maintenance of a pauper, would now find a customer in the very man that he formerly supported. Carry this idea up through all the ranks in society, and the apprehension on the subject of improving the condition of a people, and extending the political franchise to them, will at once vanish.

The foregoing observations must be carried along, in the consideration of the science of Political Economy.

Dr. Adam Smith defined Political Economy as proposing two distinct objects:—"first, to provide a plentiful revenue or subsistence for the people, or, more properly, to enable them to provide such revenue or subsistence for themselves; and, secondly, to supply the state or commonwealth with a revenue sufficient for the public services. It proposes to enrich both the people and the sovereign."

Mr. M'Culloch describes it as "the science of the laws which regulate the production, distribution, and consumption of those articles or products, that have exchangeable value, and are, at the same time, necessary, useful, or agreeable to man." *

Dr. Chalmers says, "Political Economy aims at the diffusion of sufficiency and comfort throughout the mass of the population, by a multiplication or enlargement of the outward means and materials of human enjoyment." And he adds, "Now, we hold it to be demonstrable, on its own principles, that, vary its devices and expedients as it may, this is an object which it never can secure apart from a virtuous and educated peasantry." †

The political part of this science is not sufficiently attended to. The disturbing forces of society are lost sight of in the disquisition, or they are left to be dealt with by the general historian. The greater part of books on Political Economy is composed of reasonings on certain abstract principles applied to man in society, as if he had the world before him, where to choose a locality in which to develop his powers free from restraint—or made up of rules and directions to remove impediments, or to overturn barriers, in the way of providing for the people "a plentiful subsistence," or "a sufficiency of comfort." Now, all this is to toil in a circle, unless an influence or coercion be first used over the individuals who placed those impediments, or raised those barriers, in the way of the people in their efforts to provide themselves with articles or products of consumption. How can a country have a virtuous and educated peasantry, if the men who make the laws and

* M'Culloch's edition of Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, p. 187.

† Dr. Chalmers' *Political Economy*, in connection with the *Moral State and Prospects of Society*.—Preface

possess the property of the country, believe that it would be dangerous to give education to the peasantry—education, in the proper meaning of the term. The evidence on the state of the colliers in the mining districts, lays bare a mass of ignorance, and a condition of physical degradation of men, women, and children, for which the owners of the mines, men of high rank and title, must yet answer at the bar of public opinion. It is not yet fifty years since the colliers of Scotland were in the condition of actual slaves of the soil: they could not leave the districts to which they belonged; and the mines were sold with so many labourers attached to them!

The hurricane that swept over England in the year 1066, has left its ravages on every acre of land in the country to this day. William the Conqueror seized the lands, and made his laws in spite of the principles of political economy. Now-a-days, matters are arranged differently. The descendants of the followers of that successful adventurer, and new men become rich by trade, and noble by a patent from a Secretary of State, do not muster their vassals, fed on the produce of their estates, and parade them to the alarm of peaceable citizens, but collect their tenants at elections, bribe them with money or drink, or intimidate them for their votes by the threat of expulsion from their farms, or of a rise of rent. The votes of such men are disturbing forces in the legislature to turn away the soundest principles of political economy, if adverse, or if to a narrow comprehension they appear to be adverse, to existing interests. The disturbing forces of this nature can only be neutralized by the votes of a virtuous and educated people; and let the middle classes of this great nation be alive to the truth, that a virtuous and educated order of peasantry and labourers, and, if moral and enlightened, then a well-fed order will

most assuredly follow from the voice of those peasants and labourers, being heard within the walls of parliament through representatives freely and independently chosen by that class of the community.

The time has now arrived, when it is absolutely necessary for the middle classes of this country to form a decisive resolution; to hesitate is dangerous, and may be ruinous; to stand still they cannot; in all its consequences, to remain stationary is tantamount to retrogradation: there is only one step to be taken, and that step is in *ADVANCE*; and that advance can only be secured by imparting the political franchise to hundreds of thousands of persons at present deprived of it.

But, in bestowing the right, independence must be secured for its exercise, and the act of voting must be freed from every malign disturbing force. Without this precaution, corruption will extend its influence in proportion to the extension of the suffrage. In favour of this great national object, the sympathies of the middle classes must be reached through their interests; for the more the subject is weighed, the more will it be found to be for their immediate advantage to co-operate with the classes not in possession of the privilege of voting. With regard to the possessors of power, it is in vain to argue on the justice of the case, and it would be unworthy of the cause to plead for its humanity. "What! are you to receive from kindness what you can demand as a right?"*

The holders of power were never known to give up one iota of it, except in anticipation of its being taken from them. The conscience of power can only be reached through its fears or its terrors.

These discussions must be considered as of a really

* James Jaquerie.

practical bearing, and as addressed to persons. Principles of political economy are as air, unless they lead to a control over persons by a countervailing influence. Truth will ultimately prevail, but how it must struggle against the will of men, before it gain the ascendant !

Adam Smith, the legislator and the prophet, on the subject of political economy laid down the following principles for taxation. "Taxes upon the necessities of life have nearly the same effect upon the circumstances of the people as a poor soil and a bad climate. Provisions are thereby rendered dearer in the same manner as if it required extraordinary labour and expense to raise them."

. . . "Such taxes, when they have grown up to a certain height, are a curse equal to the barrenness of the earth and the inclemency of the heavens; and yet it is in the richest and most industrious countries that they have been most generally imposed. No other countries could support so great a disorder. As the strongest bodies only can live and enjoy health under an unwholesome regimen, so the nations only, that in every sort of industry have the greatest natural and acquired advantages, can subsist and prosper under such taxes."*

How strikingly do these principles support the sentiment which pervades the whole of this treatise, that it is man, through his unwise and unjust laws, who curses the soil, and restrains its produce; and not nature that denies the means of subsistence to mankind. Smith at the same time demonstrated the impolicy and injustice of laws of prohibition of importation of live cattle and salted provisions into this country. "The freest importation of foreign cattle could have no other effect than to hinder the breeding countries—such as the mountains of Scotland, Wales, and Northumber-

* P 205, Smith.

land, from taking advantage of the increasing population and improvement of the rest of the kingdom, from raising their price to an exorbitant height, and from laying a real tax upon all the more improved and cultivated parts of the country”* . . . and . . . “To prohibit by a perpetual law of foreign corn and cattle, is in reality to enact, that the population and industry of the country shall at no time exceed what the rude produce of its own soil can maintain.”† It might be supposed that every human being, capable of forming a judgment on a plain proposition, would assent to the reasonableness of the principles propounded in these extracts; and yet a system on principles diametrically the reverse has been established, maintained, and justified, in this country since the time when Dr. Smith wrote. The generation that first heard the wisdom uttered by that writer, and the one that succeeded, have both passed from the earth, and since that period the British empire has been dismembered by its colonial revolution, and France has been regenerated by its domestic revolution. How truly did Smith estimate the “strength of body” of this country, that could support for seventy years the prohibitory laws of provisions.

It was only in the year 1842, that the prohibition was first taken off the introduction of live cattle and salt meat, but subject to a considerable tax!

Political economists, previous to the formation of their systems, must first apply themselves to destroy, or at least neutralize, the disturbing forces that act against their principles.

The Saxon economists, at the time of the Conquest, were all upset by that event, and the power that expelled the population from extensive districts, and prohibited their

* Page 202.

† Page 203.

future occupation in order to preserve the grounds for game and wild beasts, disturbed at one fell swoop all the proportions between land, labour, and capital, laid down by the promoters of "home colonization" at that period.

The loss of our American colonies stimulated the people of this country to look out for wildernesses in other regions of the globe, in which to plant new settlements. Colonization has been studied in all its bearings—principles laid down, and details extended. Smith, Chalmers, and M'Culloch have applied the vigour of their intellects to the consideration of colonization and emigration, as great national objects. But they write in vain, and all their plans fall to the ground, or, more correctly speaking, are blown into the air, by the disturbing force of a man who can bestow on a poor relation a grant of half a million of acres, to the exclusion of five thousand industrious farmers who might be comfortably located with their families on farms of a hundred acres each.* It is essential in these times to dispel by every possible illustration the fallacies which occupy the minds of men, and to press into the thoughts of the inhabitants of this country the truth, that they are defrauded to an immeasurable extent, of their just rights to the public property.

The author of an Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations, embraced every subject connected with the circumstances of this great nation; but such has been the effect of discoveries and inventions, of which he could form no anticipation, that there is now as great a division of labour, in the investigation of the several

* Can political economy give a substantial reason why the poor relative of a member of the government should have a preference to a grant of public lands at a nominal price, and other poor and industrious citizens have to pay an enormous price for the same lands.

branches of knowledge comprehended in his master-plan, as there was in some of those mechanical processes so well described by that great writer. Each part of the subject now forms the study of a certain class of economists, and a community, whose business is so extremely complicated as that of the British nation, affords scope for the exercise of the keenest intellects, on the theory of "prices," of "rent," of "money," and other matters; but the all-absorbing subjects of the age are "pauperism" and the "unequal distribution of property," caused by a partial scheme of taxation, acted on since Smith lived and wrote.

But a power, almost entirely unknown in his time, has sprung up, and acquired a vigour of accelerating force, which annihilates time and space. In his days, a citizen of Edinburgh entered on a journey to London with preparations common on setting out on an enterprise of danger; and settlements of affairs, and prayers in the churches for the safety of the adventurous traveller, preceded the departure for the great city. Could the keenest economic eye, or the most extravagant imagination of his day, have bodied forth the wonders of the Birmingham or Great Western railways!

A power which now moves vessels on every river and lake on the globe, and propels them across the ocean in the teeth of the hurricane itself, is too mighty for political economists, and even for legislatures and governments. The British ensign may, at this very moment, be waving from a steam-ship, under the walls of Pekin!* There can

* A memorandum on the manuscript shows that this was written on the 8th of Oct. 1842, and on the 24th of November of the same year, the important intelligence was announced in London, that the British fleet and army, under the walls of Nankin, had triumphed—which led to the treaty settling the political and commercial relations between Great Britain and China.

be no mistake in this matter of steam-power. In the first place, it is the triumph of mind over matter—but it is the union of these two properties, like soul and body, which, acting on society, is changing everything. Steam, like an acid applied to the alkali in human affairs, is producing a state of universal effervescence over the habitable globe. In all economic calculations, and even in disquisitions on the state of morals and laws, it is an element which must be taken into account.*

Dr. Chalmers published, in 1832, his “Political Economy, in connection with the moral State and moral Prospects of Society.” He proposed to confine himself to that department of the science, “where the theory of wealth comes into contact with the theory of population, and where the two, therefore, might be examined in connection.” He wrote at the time when a great political change or revolution was taking place in this country, which promised to produce a neutralizing influence on some of the disturbing forces of society; and, as many of his views can be applied with great advantage to the economic revolution which was in operation in 1842, it may be well to take a glance at his subject. It must be premised, that the bias of the reverend and learned Doctor is in favour of high church-and-state doctrines. His political creed may be known from the following dogma: “When power gets into the hands of the multitude, the danger is, that it may be exercised, not for guidance, but for destruction.”† To what does the word

* Steam-power may be considered labour expanded, or enlarged, to an illimitable extent, and as labour is one of the three great elements of national wealth, taken into account, and estimated at its proper value, by Dr. Smith and all the political economists before his time, it follows, that steam-power, the great substitute for labour, must upset, by its operation, all the combinations arranged by economists before its discovery, or its increase to the extraordinary magnitude of these modern times.

† Page 327.

“destruction” refer, in such an observation? It cannot mean self-destruction—for who ever heard of a people committing suicide?

Dr. Chalmers is in one respect quite sensible, that without application to personal feelings and restraint, all economic principles and enlargements are useless: he says—“We look for our common deliverance in a moral change, and not in any, or in all of those economic changes put together, which form the great panacea of so many of our statesmen. Without the prudence, and the virtue, and the intelligence of our common people, we shall only have a bulkier, but withal as wretched and distempered a community as ever; and we repeat, that a thorough education, in both the common and Christian sense of the term, forms the only solid basis on which either the political or economic well-being of the nation can be laid.”† The onus of the moral change is thus thrown on the common people, as if they could, without possession of the means, accomplish their deliverance from destitution and ignorance.* The Great Alfred laid the beneficent plan of a thorough education, both common and Christian, for his humble countrymen; and it would be well to investigate what were the causes, why, during a thousand years, no system of national education had been established. The disturbing forces of spiritual domination under worldly priests, and of aristocratic rule over the people, will be found to have retained the mass of the inhabitants of this nation in ignorance and

* He must lay an appeal to bishops and their subordinates, to legislators and landowners, touching funds which in right belong to the poor for their moral and religious education, and touching laws which oppress them in their circumstances; and he must appeal to the sense of justice in master-manufacturers regarding rates of wages, and urge on their conscience not to squeeze them on every slight occasion of depression of trade.

† Page 240.

degradation. To begin with, let Dr. Chalmers apply for the restoration to the people, of the funds of Eton, and other educational institutions, turned from their original designs, to pamper the intellectual tastes of the affluent and powerful.

In these, and similar perversions of property, originally belonging to the people, are to be found the strongholds of those opinions and motives for refusing to the people the elective franchise.

The economics of Dr. Chalmers, may be called the "economics of limitations." His work treats of the increase and "Limit" of food—of employment—of capital—of population—of foreign trade—and on the possibility of overproduction, or, of a general glut—on taxation—on tithes—and on emigration.

With all due deference to the opinions of such a celebrated writer, we may be permitted to remark, that he alarms himself by the pictures drawn by his own powerful pen. There must, of a necessity, be limits to everything that can be produced on a globe of matter only eight thousand miles in diameter, and which is apt to be affected in its course by a comet or other planetary body. It is true, that, in a given space, a certain number of human beings only can be placed with comfort to themselves, and a certain number of cattle maintained;—it is also true, that a mountainous country, containing much poor land, will not support a population equal to what rich and well-watered plains can maintain. But human indolence is so great, that it is generally the pressure of evil, rather than the hope or desire of good, that stimulates people to active exertions. Now, in this country, there is such an enormous amount of poverty, distress, and ignorance accumulated, as to excite every one to endeavour to get quit of them.

The quittance is the first and only thing to be considered, and in the exertions to effect it, it is of no utility to indulge in apprehensions of an imaginary state of doleful consequences. With every mouthful of food, in addition to the supplies of a country, he sees and apparently dreads a new mouth to eat it. Sufficient for the generation is the evil thereof. His pregnant imagination sees, in an unlimited supply of subsistence on the earth, the horrible spectacle of human beings "become as sordid and miserable as those maggots appear to be, which swarm on some mass of hideous putrefaction;" and, as herrings accumulate so densely in the western bays of this island, as to push the outskirts of the shoals upon the beach, so would the human species, pressing on the outside numbers, drive the unfortunate portion at the margin into the sea, to form food for the fishes. Such is the picture drawn by Dr. Chalmers of a supposed extraordinary abundance of food on this globe.* His theory is, "that without the medium of a higher self-respect, and higher taste for the comforts and decencies of life among the people themselves, and without a moral and voluntary restraint, no economic enlargements in the wealth and resources of the country can ensure a permanent comfort, or sufficiency to the families of the land."

He is a strict disciple of Malthus, and considers his doctrine the only one to explain the indissoluble connection between the moral character and the economic comfort of a peasantry. The doctrine is, that population must be *brought down* to the food, as nature denies the increase of subsistence in proportion to the increase of the people. Dr. Chalmers maintains that a great augmentation of food, by the repeal of corn-laws, or by any other means,

* Page 471 of Chalmers on Political Economy.

would be a mere temporary relief, and, after a while, the population would be more numerous, and as miserable as before—and more so, from the greater mass among which the misery would be extended. He appears to ridicule the apprehensions by the landlords, of an abundance of food by the repeal of the corn-laws, because, with the increase of the population, there would be a constant demand for all the corn that could be raised at home. But, in the face of all uncertainty, “he has no hesitation in affirming both the expediency and the rightness of a free trade in corn,” because by retaining the corn-laws, “we incur the urgent evil of a dissatisfied population, who feel, and perhaps with justice too, as if defrauded of their rights, by the compulsory restraints on the importation of food.” He contemplates the over-extension of cultivation, forced on deficient soils in this country, to maintain a nation composed in a great part of paupers, as leading to the most terrible state of anarchy, in which rents would be absorbed, and the higher and lower classes mingled in one common degradation.

He classes the population of the country into agricultural, secondary, and disposable—labourers, capitalists, and lords of the soil: the part of the population maintained by foreign supplies of food, imported in exchange for home-manufactures, he terms “excrescent.” The first class of labourers are those who raise food first for themselves, and then for all the other classes; the secondaries are those who make clothing, houses, and domestic utensils for the agricultural labourers; the disposable population are those who manufacture clothing, furniture, and all articles of luxury for the landlords and wealthy people. The produce of the soil is the main wealth of the country, and the foreign trade depends on the amount of it. The extent of the foreign

trade, he says, depends on the amount of the surplus wealth from the soil of a country, and takes its direction according to the tastes of the receivers of the rent of land, and of wealthy persons. He says, that the foreign trade of a country can never much "*overlap*" the value of the agricultural produce, over and above the consumption of the home-population. He entertains a low opinion of what is called commercial greatness; and announces the startling proposition, "that Britain has little or nothing to apprehend from the loss of her colonies and commerce; but that a change of employment to the disposable population, and of enjoyment to their maintainers, would form the whole result of it."* These opinions are formed or modified by his profession, and he appears to support them on the examples of the ruin of the ancient commercial states of Tyre and Carthage, and of the modern ones of Venice and others. This question will be discussed a little in the sequel.

In describing the processes of agriculture in this country—first on the best soils, then on those of second quality, and lastly on lands of less and less fertility, as population increased—an idea is raised, and carried along with one in the perusal, that the cultivators had received the lands fairly divided among them at first, and no allusion is made to the historical and political fact, that the lands were seized and monopolized by those whom Dr. Chalmers calls the lords of the soil. This personal part of the subject is entirely lost sight of in the discussion; and, so long as the political power remains in a few hands, and enables the legislating class to control the subsistence, and consequently curb the liberties, of the people, it is in vain to expect a well-fed and contented population. The lands are leased and occupied by cultivators, who are dependent as political tools on the

* Page 561.

legislating land-owners. He says: "And every season of universal scarcity, while the cause of severest suffering to the British community, would prove a rich harvest to the British landlords. They would have a fearful command over the services of the disposable population." . . "They, at all times, and amid all changes, will be lords of the ascendant. They alone stand on firm vantage-ground, and should of all men be exempted from those mercantile jealousies, by unworthily acting upon which, they have dissevered, both from their persons and their interests, the affections of the people."* But it is quite natural, that the affections of the people should be estranged from an order of men, who thus exercise a malignant influence over the comforts of the disposable population, and the inferior classes; and also, by taxing the food and other necessities of life of the excrescent population, act as a curse, equal to "the barrenness of the earth, and the inclemency of the heavens." Men of talent may deceive themselves, and mystify the subject as much as they please, but the true cause of the destitution and misery of the labouring classes in this country, is to be found in the fruits of the earth being monopolized and wasted by a comparatively small number of individuals.

* Page 538

CHAP. V.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

THE QUESTION THAT EXTREME MISERY LEADS TO THE EARLY CONNECTION BETWEEN THE SEXES, DISCUSSED—FALSE AND DANGEROUS THEORIES OF REDUNDANT POPULATION—SINGULAR CONTRAST IN THE OPINIONS OF WILLIAM COBBETT AND DR. CHALMERS—CONSEQUENCES OF THE EXCLUSIVE OR ARISTOCRATIC PRINCIPLES ON BRITISH LEGISLATION—THE JUST VIEWS OF DR. CHALMERS OF THE PUBLIC DEBT—THE LANDS ARE MORTGAGED AS ITS SECURITY—HIS LOW OPINION OF THE COMMERCIAL STATE—SKETCH OF COMMERCIAL PEOPLE—GREAT ADVANTAGES OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL SITUATION OF THE BRITISH ISLANDS—DR CHALMERS CONDEMNS A SYSTEM OF POOR-LAWS—THE CHURCH ESTABLISHMENTS OF ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND—DR. CHALMERS REPROBATES OUR WHOLE SYSTEM OF TAXATION, AND RECOMMENDS A COMMUTATION TO A GENERAL GRADUATED TAX ON RENTS AND PROPERTY.

THE imagination of Doctor Chalmers, and of those who adopt the opinions of Malthus, is, that early and improvident marriages are the causes of the destitution, and even savage misery, which is witnessed among so many millions in this nation, and hence the propagation of a caste of unhappy beings. But there is a gross mistake in this opinion, although there can be no mistake in the facts which give rise to it. The fallacy consists in mistaking the effect for the cause. These early and reckless connections between the sexes are not the causes of the misery—but it is the misery, or the instinct of self-preservation, that leads to the connections. The same necessity which forces the infant

of seven or eight years of age to labour with its hands for its food, compels the young man and the young woman to unite themselves and their fate. Extreme misery, without hope, has no practice of forethought; its existence is only for the present: amidst scenes of the greatest danger—on the raft of the wreck—in the besieged city, with famine stalking through the streets—or in a city of the plague, we shall behold men reckless; and, in the excitement of the last cup, giving way to all the apparent exhilaration of joy! Give men the prospect of some certainty of this world's goods, or even of reasonable subsistence, and their characters change, and foresight then comes into exercise.

This is a question touching men and women; and, in illustration of it, the principles of human nature may be searched for in savage races of men.

Taking the extremes of the human species for examples, it will not be said that early connections are the causes of the abject condition of the Esquimaux wanderers of the polar regions—of the Fuegians of Cape Horn—or of that singular Pariah race that roams through the forests of Australia. In each of these, and in all other races of men in extreme destitution, the sexes become connected in very early life. Sir John Ross, in his narrative of his Polar expedition, in describing a tribe of Esquimaux, mentions that all the women above thirteen years of age appeared to be married; and that one girl, quite a child, was already betrothed, according to the custom of the Polar regions; and it was even not uncommon for a man to have two wives. The duty of cutting up the seals for food was reserved for the women, either as a privilege or a service. A widow with five children immediately obtained another husband, *because* of the children, who at eight years were able to do more than maintain themselves by fishing. These savages

gorge themselves actually to the throat, when good luck puts much food within their reach.

The Fuegians live chiefly on shell-fish; and if they miss the ebb-tide, they must go without their food till the rocks again become exposed; their condition is on a par with the wild animals that share the same kind of food with them. "A woman who was suckling a recently-born child, came one day alongside the vessel, and remained there while the sleet fell and thawed on her naked bosom, and on the skin of her naked child.... These poor wretches were stunted in their growth, their hideous forms bedaubed with white paint, their skins filthy and greasy, their hair entangled, their voices discordant, their gestures violent and without dignity.... At night, five or six human beings, naked and scarcely protected from the wind and rain of their tempestuous climate, sleep on the wet ground, coiled up like animals." *

Our fellow-subjects, the Australian savages, have a character peculiar to themselves. Nature, in their country, has been extremely niggard of the elements of subsistence. The scarcity of food, and the incessant exertions to procure the scanty supply, force on the Australian natives features which distinguish them from all others. There is a sacredness about their food—and connected with it are many curious customs: certain kinds of food are prohibited to the young of both sexes; young men are not allowed to eat the flesh of the higher game till they have gained strength to kill it for themselves. This is but reasonable, as the restriction serves as a training to them, to acquire, as soon as possible, the dexterity in the use of the spear, on which their very existence must depend. But, as soon

* Darwin's Narrative of the Surveying Voyages of the Adventure and Beagle, 1826-36.

as the young savage has arrived at his strength, and learned the use of his arms, he, in the lusty stealth of nature, seizes a female from a hostile tribe, and makes her his wife, and his slave. By mutual aid, two human beings, in a case of great extremity, may contrive to exist; but if they act separately, are sure to perish. The prohibition of certain kinds of food is rigorously observed among the savages of Australia, and serves the same purpose as the law among civilized men, of fixing an age for coming into the possession of an estate.

There is truly a mystery in the existence of a great portion of the human race in a state which, physically, places them nearly on a level with the beasts which surround them. The first impression made on the reflective mind is one of terror; for it seems as if the Deity were malignant, in abandoning his creatures to the withering sterility of nature, or indifferent to their fate by leaving them to be cruelly starved by their fellow-men.

It is melancholy and humiliating to think, that, within the limits of the British islands there are portions of the population physically as shockingly destitute as the Fuegian or the Australian natives, while their minds, acutely touched by the degradation of their situation, are irritated by the sight of abundance around them. Here, in the midst of Europe, in a country boasting of its Christian civilization, of its commerce, and its political power, there is a considerable part of the inhabitants in the fearful straits of a state of nature. This state of destitution and misery is not the consequence of sterility of soil, of failure of harvests, of war, or pestilence, but it is the result of a defect in the laws of the country.

In certain of our large cities there is an artificial famine, which presses on a great part of their inhabitants with a

severity approaching to the horrible privations during the sieges of ancient Jerusalem, when "an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver." In this country women have pledged their marriage-rings for food; and when one considers how sacred these objects are in the estimation of the wearers, there is in this state of misery only one step more to the disposing of their children.*

Let the economists know that it is the necessity of self-preservation that forces to early connection; for a couple may preserve existence on seven shillings a week, gained jointly; but if they remain separate with three shillings and sixpence each, it will be scarcely possible for them to live. And are these people, so steeped in misery, to have no solace in the affections which are planted in their breasts by nature †

The false theories which have been started by economists, and adopted by thousands without examination, produce

* The immense heap of misery in the cities of this country is composed of such frightful details as now to deter men of great physical and moral courage from witnessing them; and it is believed that nothing worse has ever been seen during times of actual famine and pestilence. The following is the result of an investigation in Manchester:—

2,000 families, 8,866 persons.—Total income £528 10s 10d.

Number of pawn-tickets 22,417; value of articles pawned £2,780 14s. 4d.

Wages: average a week for each person 1s. 2½d; for each family 5s. 3¼d.

The food of these unhappy people is actually taxed †

† "My friend asked him, whether under the circumstances he did not repent his early and imprudent marriage? He paused, looked fondly at his wife, who returned the gaze with a melancholy smile of enduring affection. he dashed the tear aside, and with calm firmness replied—Never! We have been happy and have suffered together—and she has been the same to me all through." . . . "Never shall I forget the agony with which a young widow described to me her parting with a wooden clock, which her late husband had given her on the day of her marriage."—*Taylor's Letters descriptive of the Misery of Manufacturing Districts.*

practically violent effects on the population, described as redundant or excrescent. There are many symptoms in this country of a dissolution of society approaching, and of a return to first principles; and the destruction is beginning by the few on the multitude. The clearing of the inhabitants of entire districts, for the purpose of converting the lands into large farms, has been going on for two generations. A great part of the Highlands of Scotland was depopulated, and the people, whose forefathers had been located for ages, were shipped off to the forests of America; and in the present day the system is still continued. In Ireland a system of clearing is acted on.* A most useful and loyal class are expatriated, to become enemies to the country that drives them from its bosom. It is well known, that during the wars with America, we found countrymen in arms against us. The feelings of rancorous hatred, displayed against us by the North Americans of the present day, are the offspring of the injustice which their fathers suffered at the hands of their country, or, more correctly speaking, of a fraction of the society represented by a few thousand individuals.

There is in the present day a perfect wildness in the practical application of these crude theories of population; and the following copy of a document which appeared in the columns of the *Times* and *Morning Chronicle* newspapers of the 17th August 1842, will astound the world, as an instance of the civilization of the great land-owners in this country! “Worsley, 30th July 1842. The evils which an overcrowded population entails upon the poorer classes of society make it necessary to consider in what manner this may

* For an account of which, see evidence of Lord Stanley, in Letter V. of William Cobbett to the Labourers, page 86.

with the most ease, and with the least interference with their comforts, be diminished gradually, and finally removed altogether. There can be no doubt that early and ill-considered marriages between very young persons is (are) one cause of these evils—marriages contracted without forethought, and without any consideration as to the means of future support and maintenance of children. Such marriages should be discouraged for the sake of the individuals themselves, as well as for that of their parents and neighbours. Such marriages receive great encouragement upon the Bridgewater estate, from the parties being permitted to reside in their parents' dwellings after marriage, thereby producing other serious evils and inconveniences. It is therefore hereby intimated, that after the 1st day of October next, no cottage tenant shall permit any newly-married son or daughter to take up their residence in this house without leave in writing from Mr. Feriday Smith, or Mr. Robert Lansdale, as the case may be, or the tenant himself will be put under notice. Mr. Lansdale will fill up any cottage now vacant from those cottages which contain more than one family, taking care that the vacancy thus made shall not be filled up by an extra-family or lodger."—Signed "JAMES LOCK."

The London newspapers which contained the foregoing document, stated, that it was published in the "Manchester Times" newspaper, with the remark, that it was the copy of a circular sent to the tenants on the Bridgewater estate, and the individual who signed it is the trustee, or land-agent, for that property, belonging to the late Duke of Bridgewater. The document is a very remarkable one, and in no other country of the world would such a one be seen, not even excepting Turkey, where the domi-

cile, we believe, is considered sacred. Now, as the present epoch is one in which questions touching the right of property, and its liability to taxation, are deeply considered, it may be well to remind the great land-owners, that after titles to land shall have been examined, on the principles of the common-law and of the strict statute-law, it will be found, that the poor have a right to the first-fruits of the land, even before the men who claim the property of the soil.* Everything in this country is now in a state of transition, and if the transit end in a catastrophe, the dominant class incur the fearful and voluntary responsibility, by having fixed on property, and on questions of fiscal arrangements, as the grounds on which the issue shall be decided. They have made the bed for themselves, and on it they must lie.

It so happens, that William Cobbett anticipated this matter in the Letters which he dedicated to Sir Robert Peel, in December, 1834.†

Cobbett, during the whole of an active life, was an ardent, but in some things an inconsistent, partisan. However, he was an extraordinary man, and possessed a true English spirit, which survives in his writings. One of the letters referred to is entitled, "Can landlords use their lands so as to drive the natives from them?" the letter which follows asks, "Can the landlords rightfully use the lands, so as to cause the natives to perish of hunger or of cold?" He

* The long-continued discussions on the subject of redundant population in this country, have impressed on the minds of the labouring classes, the idea of a division of lands, for they naturally inquire, why should they be the only parties who must perish, or leave the land of their birth? they ask, why not cast lots among *all*, for the chance?

† See "Cobbett's Letters," containing his "Legacy to Labourers: or, What is the right which the Lords, Baronets, and Squires have to the lands of England?" Dedicated to Sir Robert Peel, Bart. 1835.

answers both in the negative. There is in the writings of Cobbett, the concentrated spirit of strong sense, and he applies to his subject, when needed, much acquired knowledge. He says, "One of the great principles of natural justice is, that every man has a right *to be* in the country where he was born. Blackstone says, "*Every Englishman may claim a right to abide in his own country so long as he pleases, and not to be driven from it, except by sentence of the law.*" "But, if one landlord have a right to drive all the people from his estate, every other landlord has the same right; and as every piece of the land is held by some landlord or other, and as all would have the same right as the first driver, all the people, except the landlords, might be driven into the sea." Even on the principles of the *right* to the possession of the lands, the conditions have not been fulfilled, to confirm and continue the title—the lands were retained, but the land-tax which was attached to them was evaded. The law and practice of England assigned, for the use of the poor, a third part of all the tithes of the country. This historic fiscal fact ought never to be lost sight of by the public.

Cobbett established, from the law of nature, that if animals have a right to the food offered by God on the soil of a country, surely men can claim a portion of the products of the land, in the case of accident to limb, or of sickness and old age. He also proves, from the law of the country, and on the authority of the most celebrated writers, that the poor possess a right to maintenance—"Because charity is here, in England, reduced to a system, and interwoven in our very constitution, by the several statutes made for the relief of the poor."* He says, that "it may be right for the government to take away all the rents; and if so,

* Blackstone, quoted by Cobbett at page 135 of Letter VI.

the government only *resumes* that which it granted; but it cannot be right for the government to take away the fruit of the labourer: for it *never granted the fruit of the labour*. A nation may exist without landlords; but without labourers, not only its political but its physical existence is impossible." . . . "The labourers have a right to subsistence out of the land, in all cases of inability to labour; that all those who are able to labour, have a right to subsistence out of the land, in exchange for their labour; and that, if the holders of the land will not give them subsistence, in exchange for their labour, they have a right to the land itself." *

Now, in the case of the estates of the Duke of Bridgewater, we behold a frail creature usurping the prerogatives of the Almighty, in the expulsion from the soil on which they were born, of couples who, in the indulgence of the natural affections, were sheltered under the parental roof. Of what forbidden fruit did they partake, thus to incur the banishment from their domestic Paradise! O England! England! you are either sinking rapidly into the depths of barbarism, or else you are stooping for a season to gather strength, in order to throw off the load, "like the dew-drop from the lion's mane." †

England has produced only one William Cobbett; and in no other country can there be found a character approaching in features to his. "He was born in a cottage, and bred to the plough;"—served as a common soldier—rose to the rank of sergeant-major, and in the barrack-room, at intervals from drill, writing on his knapsack for a table, he perfected himself in the knowledge of the language of his country, and afterwards applied that language, almost to the last day of a long life, to the exposure of abuses, and to the pulling

* Letter VI. p. 140.

† Shakspeare.

down of the strongholds of tyranny. "Men in mighty power were thirty-four years endeavouring to destroy him;"* but in spite of these endeavours, and by the exercise of a manly spirit, he gained admittance into the legislature, and never ceased to advocate the cause of the people. His writings have fixed the standard of the English language; and in his pages many of the public characters of his time will acquire an unenviable fame: for certain it is, that his writings will survive and be searched, long after the memory of men famous in their day has perished from history.

In the study of character, there is nothing so striking as the contrast in the opinions on certain subjects entertained by celebrated writers. Between William Cobbett and Doctor Chalmers there is a wonderful difference. The Professor of Divinity designates the law which guarantees to the old, infirm, and indigent, a protection from the inclemency of the seasons, and a provision against hunger, as the "ACCURSED *law of pauperism*;" and, while he would deny to the poor any legal claim on the fruits of the earth, under any circumstances except disease or accident, he would maintain the law of primogeniture in its fullest extent, even though estates should accumulate in one hand to the amount of half the kingdom; and this to maintain "a splendid Aristocracy, and a gradation of ranks shelving down to the basement of society." On the subject of Aristocracy, there is something rather remarkable in the enthusiasm of the reverend and learned Doctor, who appears to have drawn his inspiration from the Chronicles of Froissart, rather than from those of Moses. "He thinks of our own political fabric, that it not only affords a vastly greater number of noble and graceful spectacles, in the minarets and the blazing pinnacles which crowd its ele-

* His Letter to Peel

vation; but that, abstracting from the degradation which has been caused by its accursed law of pauperism, it would have had a more elevated basement in its well-conditioned peasantry, than any other country or kingdom of the civilized world. It is not for the sake of its ornaments and chivalry alone—it is not for the sake of these chiefly, that we want the high rank and fortune of our Aristocracy to be upholden. It is because we think there is a soul in chivalry, which, though nursed in the bosom of affluence, does not cloister there, but passes abroad, from mind to mind, and lights up a certain glow of inspiration throughout the mass of a community.”* It is long since it was said that “the age of chivalry was gone”—and in the history of this country, there is nothing less noble or chivalrous than the proceedings of the Aristocracy in matters of taxation. One of the strongest objections made by Dr. Chalmers to the legal claim by poor people for maintenance, is the bluntness of feeling thereby created towards relatives, and the indifference of children to their aged parents. But this assertion may be well doubted, as it is contrary to the character of the English common people.

There is, however, no doubt of the fact, that two hundred and thirty-three members of the House of Commons, men of high rank and great pretensions, representing the aristocratic class, refused, so late as the year 1837, to give assent to the natural sentiment, “that when close relationship exists, and where means of support may be afforded, it is to family connections, and not to the public purse, that application for relief should be made.”†

It is perfectly manifest, that there is in the mind of

* Chalmers' Political Economy; chapter on the Law of Primogeniture, page 369.

† Report of the Committee of the House of Commons on Pensions.

Dr. Chalmers a degree of hallucination on the subjects which are of the greatest consequence to the people of the British Islands. He does not perceive any *disturbing force* in partial legislation acting on millions of the population who must remain passive victims. He views this country as verging on the extreme limit of its resources, because, as he states, "it has long been the seat of pure legislation, and of safe and prosperous industry." With respect to purity of legislation, there is of course a liberty of opinion to those who believe it to exist: but if even the one million of electors of the United Kingdom should be consulted, it will probably be found that three-fourths of them do not agree with the Reverend Doctor; and if such be nearly the fact, what will be said of the six or seven millions of men of full age who are not allowed any representation at all, and yet are taxed proportionally heavier in their consumption than the most affluent and powerful classes in the country?* We always considered that the corruptions of our elective system, and the consequent impurity of the legislative body, were the most marked and disgraceful circumstances in the history of this country, from the Revolution downwards. It is believed that in this respect this country stands alone in the world, as setting an example of unprecedented bribery in processes leading to legislation. People in considering the state of this country are very apt to confound one thing with another. The security of property of all kinds is as effectual as law can make it. This

* The state of opinion is to be known frequently from incidental circumstances. In the town of Birmingham, in October 1842, there was a poll of the church-rate-payers for a rate of 6d. in the pound, and at the end of six days the state of the poll stood—

For the Rate	626	|	Against it	7281
Being more than ten to one against the church-rate !				

of course is a very great matter. As soon as a man acquires one shilling's worth of property, it is as safe as the estate of the duke: in fact, the duke finds his own property guarded by that protection afforded to the shilling of the poor man. No matter how the property is got, so long as it is not gained by open breach of the laws, the possession is guaranteed by law. The manufacture of law is one of the most profitable businesses in this country: it is the greatest monopoly under the canopy of heaven, and has thrown a mass of wealth into the hands of a small class of the population, greater than almost ever was known on earth. Law and property are thus partners in trade, but they have forms of doing business peculiar to themselves. Law may spoliage, but property gives substantial and outward respectability to the firm. Credit is the basis of trade, and it is secured by punctuality of payments. British national credit stands good in the mart of the world. The rulers of this country have always taken merit for the maintenance of public credit, by the regularity of the settlement of engagements, and they usually make a boast of the circumstance. But from whose pockets are the national creditors paid every quarter-day; or, more expressively speaking, out of whose mouths is the bread taken, to constitute a fund to satisfy the just demands of the creditors who in good faith have lent their money? How easy it is for men to boast of a thing, and make a display of it, when got at the expense of other persons!

Dr. Chalmers takes just views of the nature of the debt of this country, and he quiets the minds of the public creditors; and whatever should happen, the creditors are safe in having a lien over the lands of the kingdom—his words are:—"We are aware, that the national debt falls with the weight of a mortgage on every estate of the island;

a weight, too, that has of late become more oppressive, by the change which has taken place in the value of money. But, looking comprehensively at the matter, these mortgagees should be regarded in the light of landed proprietors. By the national debt, there has virtually been a division between them and the land-owners, of the territory of the empire. Regarding, then, both the land and the stockholders, as in fact proprietors of the soil, and as sharing between them the net rent which accrues from it; who will deny, that between these two classes there is at this moment a greater fund for taxation, and for the exigencies of the State, than there ever was in any former period of the British history?"* Popular clamour is sometimes raised against the public creditor, and directed to schemes of breaking faith with him. Now, the people of this country ought to be perfectly aware, that the affair is one between the holders of the public funds, and the holders of lands. The truth is, supposing that the debt of this country was actually incurred for the national defence, and for the preservation of the lives and property of the citizens, there can be nothing so sacred as this debt, and nothing so strongly binding on the consciences of the citizens, as the fulfilment of engagements with the creditors. But, even supposing that the greater part of this debt was incurred for other purposes than those strictly national—say, for forcing kings on other nations, or for the gratification of ambitious men—still the country is bound to pay the creditors; but in this case it must come on the parties who were responsible for the acts,—or, in other words, must foreclose the mortgage on the properties that were bound up as security for the advance of the money. This is stating the case in a plain business-like manner; and rather than the public

* Page 253 of his *Political Economy*.

creditor should be defrauded, the State is bound to give to the holders of stock, conveyance-orders on the lands most liable to the charge.*

That something must be done in this country, of a decided character, to meet the exigences of the times, most persons are agreed; and the people must more than ever be alive to the preservation of what remains to them, and to the maintenance of the national honour. It is worthy of being particularly remarked here, and it ought to make its full impression on the public mind, that the first breach made of good faith with the public creditor, was made in the present year, 1842, by the party in power representing the great landed Aristocracy of this country. This breach was effected through the present income-tax, which touched certain public funds or annuities which ought never to have been touched. — The views and plans, recommended by Dr. Chalmers, in the year 1832, may be applied with great propriety and benefit to the circumstances of the country, in the succeeding decade of 1842. Some of them, however, are quite paradoxical. He maintains that absenteeism of landlords and other wealthy persons is not prejudicial to the country as respects the *British consumption* of foreign articles: and he argues that a rental of a million sterling,

* Doctor Chalmers states this very clearly. — "The land is as good as partitioned between the landed proprietors, and the national creditors who are the mortgagees. Should the debt overtake the wealth of our proprietors, should the mortgage equal the value of the land, and still justice be scrupulously adhered to, there would be no disappearance of property in consequence, there would only be the dispossession of existing proprietors," page 128. — "Landlords would have to do generally, in consequence of the extravagance of government, what they have often to do severally, in consequence of their own individual extravagance. They would have to renounce their estates in favour of their creditors; when, as we have already said, the ultimate effect of the expenditure would be, not in the main to have been a reduction of property, but only a rotation of it." p. 129.

may be spent in France, by British or Irish landlords, with as much advantage to this country as at home. He overlooks the disturbing force of the Custom-house laws of France, which prevent the introduction of British goods for the consumption of the absentees, for he goes on the assumption that the produce of their estates are sent after them in the shape of British manufactures, and that the food raised from them remains at home. There is a fallacy throughout, in his reasonings on the subject of absenteeism.

His low opinion of the value of commerce has already been alluded to. He argues that all the grave deliberations on the China trade—or the Portuguese trade—or the West India trade—reduce themselves into the processes of serving the families of the land with tea, or wine, or sugar, or oranges, or coffee, or tobacco. Only let him carry forward his reasonings to the ultimate result, and deprive the inhabitants of the British islands of the articles enumerated, and we should, at one rebound, fall into comparative barbarism. It is not a mere question on how much or how little would suffice “poor unaccommodated man—who owes the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume,”*—but how commerce, as bringing nations and their inhabitants within the bonds of reciprocal interest, may extend civilization and science, and facilitate the spread of Christianity over the globe we inhabit. Indeed, the reverend Doctor is led afterwards to appreciate the power and advantages which manufactures and foreign commerce have imparted to Great Britain, in wars, negotiations, and missionary labours, in various countries of the world.

At the present time there is antagonism in opinion, on the true sources of greatness of the British empire. The fate of Tyre, Carthage, Venice, and Genoa is ever before

* Lear.

the mind, when the commercial nature of this country is under consideration. It is a favourable geographical position, which attracts and fixes commerce to a country, or city, or harbour. It is the situation, which, as affording a facility of collecting produce and merchandise, and of transit to near or distant countries, gives a value to the place. But commerce is like water, in finding out new channels for itself—and when other communications are discovered and opened, the old ones are less used, or perhaps abandoned altogether. Wars have a powerful influence over commerce, and, in many instances, at once raise a place into importance as a commercial depôt, or destroy it. In our own day, we have seen this strikingly exemplified. A sterile rock may become the pivot on which the commerce of a whole continent turns. Malta and Helgoland, during the great European war, were great entrepôts of trade—the one for the countries of the north, and the other for the countries on the shores of the Mediterranean; but as soon as the treaties of peace were signed, those barren spots were at once abandoned as seats of trade. There was, however, no loss of capital, beyond the loss or depreciation of value of houses or stores, which had been built for the merchants and their goods. The ships were employed in carrying the people and merchandise to other places, and the debts due by foreigners to the merchants were recovered, and remitted to the new stations of trade. The vague idea is, that when a place is abandoned as a commercial station, there is a destruction or annihilation of the capital which was employed in it; but this is a mistake: for, long before the desertion of the dwellings, the moveable property would be gradually collected, and transferred to new channels. The loss or the deterioration of the buildings, is of course irreparable in the case of total

or partial abandonment. If a commercial city or *dépôt* be taken and pillaged by a fierce enemy, then the matter is very different—but in war, the country, with its fields, suffers as much as the towns. It is melancholy to ramble through a ruined city, once the seat of a great population, engaged in the active excitement of commerce,—but a deeper melancholy sinks on the soul of the traveller, who traverses a country of fertile plains and valleys made desolate by revolutions, and the remnant of the population degraded into miserable serfs. Such observations ought to occur to the mind, on considering the present state of the British empire, and they will help to remove the apprehension of the transfer from this country of a great commerce. Tyre, and the other ancient commercial states, fell to destruction, either under the judgment of heaven, or in consequence of the establishment of markets more favourably situated. The Crusades, by pouring a deep stream of men and wealth from the north to the south, enriched Venice and Genoa—and for several ages the commerce of the world was divided between those rival states.

But the geographical situation of the British islands will command for them a full share of the commercial intercourse with the universal globe, as long as mankind continue to have habits and tastes similar to those possessed by the generations that have gone before. It is not a mere figure of speech to say, that London is the centre of the world, but it is literally and geographically true. But not to be too precise in an admeasurement of this kind: take the centre of England as the point whence to draw the lines, and it will be found that eastward to Kamtschatka, and westward to Behring's Straits, the distances are about equal; from the same centre, the lines drawn to Pekin, and to Lima—to Canton and Mexico—to Cal-

cutta and New Orleans—to Cabul and New York—to Bombay and Washington—to the Cape of Good Hope and Buenos Ayres—to Alexandria and Moscow,—are respectively about the same lengths. Hindostan and the West India Islands are about equidistant. So are Ceylon and Panama—Sumatra and California—the Caspian Sea and Newfoundland—Spitzbergen and Hudson's Bay. And taking the greatest rivers of the world, we shall find that the mouths of the Mississippi and the Ganges—of the St. Lawrence and the Niger—of the Amazon and the Indus, are, respectively, about equidistant from Great Britain. The distances are not the sailing ones, but are taken roughly from lines drawn across the map or chart of the globe.

It will be new to many persons to know, that we are living on an island situated nearly in the middle of the habitable earth. Now, we may be well satisfied with this great natural advantage which Providence has given to us, without aiming and striving at what is called the mastery of the seas, or the command of the commerce of the world.* There is no use of heroics in the plain hard business of commerce and navigation. What we have to do is, to free ourselves from the withering grasp of partial lawgivers,

* It would diminish, and perhaps remove, that jealousy entertained by foreigners, of what is called the maritime preponderance of Great Britain, were they to reflect that our sea-going habits are not so much matters of choice, as of necessity. We cannot leave the limits of our country without going on ship-board; hence the number of our vessels in the narrow seas, and in all parts of the ocean—hence, also, the necessity of our having colonies. Would the good people of France and other countries have us to remain for ever within our boundaries? Our fleets, commercial and military, are necessary for our very existence, and we will not meddle with any power, if we are not meddled with. The great standing-armies of France, Russia, and Prussia, cannot be justified with equal reason.

and to act to one another, and to foreign nations, on the sheep-like principle, of "live and let live;" and, stirred by competition, and animated by the British spirit of not being outdone, we may bid defiance to all the world. Let us attend strictly to our own great national interests, and leave other countries to do the same for themselves, and we need not fear. Each individual in a community is labouring to advance himself, and promote his own interest. The motive is purely selfish; and so admirably are human affairs adjusted by a superior Power, that the result of this selfish individual action is the best that could be devised for the good of *all* the members of the society. So it is in the great community of the nations of the earth—each pursues its own object, and forms its own polity, and hence the advantage to all. Again, the different sections of a nation, by improving their local circumstances, increase the general strength. Men are formed to unite into nations, and national character is as varied and marked as individual character; and it is necessary that it should be so, for cosmopolitan theories are not adapted to human nature.

Dr. Chalmers supports his views of the comparative insignificance of foreign commerce to a great nation, on the extraordinary career of France under Napoleon, when her commerce was nearly annihilated. He says, "The truth is, that it was the wreck of her commerce which created her armies. Her disposable population, disbanded from their former pacific employments, flocked in myriads to the standard of independence, and at length of aggression and conquest over all her enemies. Their old employment failed them, but their maintenance did not fail them"* In the first place, the French revolution, and the master-

spirit who controlled, and carried it over Europe, were two things, the like of which the world had never seen: they created circumstances for themselves, and war and commerce, in one respect, went hand in hand. The excited state of the popular mind, that always takes place in every great crisis of a country, was worked up in France into a flame of enthusiasm which nothing could withstand. Secondly—Napoleon supported his armies, and carried on his wars, at the expense of the conquered country. This is a matter of notoriety; and the restitution of the pictures and valuable works of art, from Paris to the countries whence taken, showed the extent of the pillage which had been practised.

He says of machinery used in the processes of manufacture—"The war against machinery is a war against human enjoyments."†

He advocates with much eloquence the common and Christian education of the people, and maintains, that without a national system for the elevation of the character of the labouring classes, all economics are useless; but he assigns no funds for such an indispensable object.

He condemns in the strongest terms, "a compulsory provision for the indigent," and would leave the care of the distressed part of the population entirely to private benevolence;—but he overlooks, in this section of his subject, the primary claim which the indigent, maimed, and diseased have to the fruits of the land. He also loses sight of the vast difference between the use and abuse of an institution in itself good. He is evidently startled by the monstrous perversion of the parochial funds, under the old system. With much more reason he ought to condemn to total alienation, the large funds of the church, of public

* Page 476.

universities, and of educational institutions, to purposes of more general instruction. As a churchman, he is of course a staunch supporter of a national establishment; but as regards the freedom of conscience of the people, he does not explain how far he would carry the principle—“*Give flesh to roast for the priest; and if thou shalt not give it me now, I will take it by force.*”

In the difference between the southern and northern kingdoms of the islands, there is nothing which contrasts more strikingly than the church establishments. The Scots church, as a corporation, is supposed to be poor, or at least to be possessed of a decent competency only—while the English church, from possessing an amount of property larger than all the churches of Christendom together, is believed to be very wealthy. As a corporation, it is actually poorer than that of Scotland; for, if its large revenue were divided among its clergy, there would be an average of less amount a year to each, than the Scottish establishment affords to its ministers.* In another part of

* From Spackman's Statistical Tables for 1843:—

	<i>Church of England.</i>	<i>Church of Ireland</i>	<i>Kirk of Scotland</i>
Dignitaries and Incumbents .	11,478	1,737	Ministers 1072
Curates	4,813	833	. . . . . none
Nonresident Ministers	4,300	345	. . . . . none
Total Nett Annual Income. .	£3,490,400	£374,500	. . . . . £231,400
(This represents a capital of about one million sterling)			
Annual average to each dignitary, Minister, and Curate	£214	£245	Glebes, Seat-rents, Collections, &c. . . £116,190
The average to each Curate is	£ 81	£ 68	No Minister of the Church of Scotland has less than £150 a year.
Average Income of Archbishops and Bishops }	£5,936	£7,505	The stipends run up to £500, and there are only 17 livings above £500 a year.
			Average of the 'total number, each about £230.

Total number of Benefices in the Church of England..... 10,718

Total number of Dissenting Places of Worship in England and Wales 8,735

As Dissenters build churches only where they are wanted, and as their churches are generally filled, it may be said, in round numbers, that half the population of England and Wales are Dissenters.

this work it has been asserted, that Aristocracies, or exclusive bodies, have a natural tendency to accumulation, in order to throw large fortunes into the hands of a few individuals with mitres on their heads, gold or silver sticks in their hands, or coloured silk ribbons thrown across their shoulders.

The church-establishment of England is an example to fully substantiate the hypothesis. Now, contrast Scotland, and it will be seen, that the public property of the church is fairly and honestly distributed among the ministers, who must efficiently and personally perform their respective duties, in return for the stipends which they receive. But what is the use of reasoning on these subjects, so long as there exist the disturbing forces of the votes of twenty-six bishops in the legislature of the United Kingdom?*

With respect to the plan of emigration, which is held

At page 172 of this volume, it is stated that the total number of churches in all Scotland is 1804, and ministers, 1765. So that there appears to be about the same proportion of Dissenters there as in England.

In Ireland, out of eight millions, there is only about one million of Protestants of all sects.

Dissenters are taxed, in the shape of church-rates, to increase the great wealth of the church.

* The English church is the model of a pure Aristocracy, with "the minarets and blazing pinnacles which crowd its elevation"—with its princes and priests—the mass of its revenues divided among the high dignitaries, or engrossed by luxurious sinecurists—the remainder frittered among a poverty-struck order of hard-working ecclesiastics—and there is pomp in the forms of worship, with ignorance and degradation among vast numbers of the worshippers.

The Scotch church is a pure Democracy; the revenues are equitably distributed—the recipients do their duty, because all are on a footing of equality, and it is only superior talent and greater zeal which distinguish the members, and hence the highest of all rivalships—the rivalry to do the most good, the population are instructed and orderly, and Scotland has for ages been referred to, by countries more favoured by nature, as containing a sys-

forth as a panacea for national distress by colonial economists, Doctor Chalmers maintains that no relief can be expected from this source, and that the population will continue to increase and press on, in exact proportion to the numbers sent abroad. Other things remaining the same, emigration would be like letting water flow out of a cistern, while an equal quantity was running into it; it would thus be always kept full. But he would commute a compulsory system of maintenance of the poor, into an alternative of emigration, to the class of the population in want of the aid of public charity. A cruel alternative! and quite in the spirit of Eastern despotism, to offer the choice of absolute starvation at home, or the dismemberment of natural ties to a country, and expatriation to some distant and unknown wilderness! But, as a minister of religion, he is anxiously concerned for the welfare of our population, and he adds—"Next to the salvation of their immortal souls, one of our fondest aspirations in behalf of the general peasantry, is, that they shall be admitted to a larger share of this world's abundance, than now falls to their lot."

The first step to be taken to put them into a larger share, is, "*to free their food from Taxation,*" and thereby remove the curse of sterility thrown on the country. And

tem, calculated to improve and sustain the character of its inhabitants. Dr. Chalmers says—"We are far from the opinion, that "*vox populi*" is "*vox Dei*,"—but as a Christian minister he must hold, that there is more of the voice of God heard from the hearts of a vast multitude, in the enjoyment of a fair portion of this world's blessings, contented and enlightened, than from a nation, oppressed and unhappy, under the sway of princes and priests, who, through their laws, are continually crying, "Give, give, or we will take it by force." Broad views only are taken of subjects. The observations on the church-system of Scotland, apply with more force to the dissenting church in that country, *that* contains many men of first-rate talents, and has *all* its ministers pious and learned.

this leads to one of the most important of the subjects discussed by that celebrated writer.

He condemns the principle, and reprobates the whole system, of the taxation of this country. He, however, entertains peculiar views of the revenue and expenditure of Great Britain. He professes himself to be no friend* to retrenchment, and he would not reduce the amount of revenue collected by taxation, but merely commute the taxation from one object to another. He would only desire a reduction or a removal of taxes, "if followed up by the substitution, in their place, of a tax on the net rent of land." The whole plan which he recommends, is reduced to the change or commutation of taxes on *subsistence*, on profits, and on labour, to a *system of taxation on land collected in a centage on the net rent of land*. He describes the existing scheme of taxation in this country thus: "by the limitation which it imposes on agriculture, it operates just as a large encroachment of the sea would, or as a blight, on the quality of the soil." This bereavement of territory, or this curse of barrenness, would, by a lessening of the country's food, lead, through a midway passage of penury and distress, to a lessening of the capital and population."† Every commutation of a tax from commodities in general use, to the rent of land, lets forth the agriculture, instead of contracting.‡

There is not space here to follow the processes of demonstration used by the reverend Doctor, in the propounding of his views of taxation. He establishes the truth, that the landlords themselves are the ultimate sufferers by the present indirect system of taxation. "He says, that capitalists and labourers are the temporary, but landlords are the principal and permanent sufferers by the taxes

* Page 260.

† Page 295.

‡ Page 296.

in question." "They at length have not only to pay in advanced prices and the additional expenses of husbandry together, the full amount of the taxes; but in virtue of the straitened cultivation which has taken place in consequence of them, they have to meet the charge with a proportionally less income than they would otherwise have had." If his views were necessary to remove the evils of 1832, how much more applicable are they to the accumulated distresses of another decade, when the country appears to stand on the verge of a crisis.

His views are brought in support of the argument carried throughout this work—namely, that the taxation on the necessary food, and other articles required by the people, is at the root of all the distresses and destitution of the masses of this population; and it ought at once to be removed, and the amount laid on land, and on the transfer of real property. The practical cures for the distresses of the country, are, the total repeal of the corn-laws, and of the laws taxing live or dead animals to serve for food to the inhabitants—the total repeal of the duties on malt and hops—the reduction to a mere statistical duty on sugar, coffee, tea, rice, wheaten-flour, fruits, and the transfer of the amount raised from these articles to a charge on real estates passing into the hands of heirs at law, and to a tax on the net rents of lands. But, in taxing the revenues from real property, a graduated rate is recommended by the reverend Doctor who maintains "that the proprietor of ten thousand a year, could not only part with a larger sum annually, but a larger proportional sum, than the proprietor of a thousand a year."* Indeed, in his estimation this is one of the great advantages of the law of primogeniture, BY PRESENTING LARGE PROPERTIES IN FEW HANDS AS SUBJECTS FOR TAX-

ATION. He says of popular topics, "The loudest against the burden of taxation, are the loudest against the law of primogeniture." There can be no wonder at that, when it is considered that it is by the law of primogeniture that the burden falls light on the law-makers, and crushes with its weight the mass of the population. The law of primogeniture is the grand disturbing force to which this country is exposed.

The whole scope of his two chapters on the "Effects of Taxes" is in favour of a complete commutation of taxes as they exist, to a general tax on the net income of landlords, who would still have the possession of as zealous an interest as heretofore in the improvement of their property, even subject to a tax of fifty per cent on the net revenue.* So much was he impressed with the importance and the advantage of a tax on private revenue from property, that he recommended in 1832 an immediate trial, or beginning, of a plan of commutation from taxes on commodities.

The financial policy of the present government of 1842, is exactly copied from the suggestions made by Doctor Chalmers ten years before; and the very arguments used by the Doctor were borrowed in the discussions in parliament.† So earnest was he in this matter, that rather than not make a beginning, he would be at first satisfied with so small an amount as one or two per cent, "that all pretext for discontent on the part of the labouring classes might be done away."‡ But he claimed no merit for "boldness" of conception in proposing such a moderate rate on the net rent of

* Page 249.

† The Premier got some credit for "*boldness*" in his plans by the organs of his party. There was a good deal of "*assurance*" in the plans, in the act of appropriating them from the real author, without any acknowledgment by the person who made use of them

‡ Note at page 304.

land. He even went farther, in order to conciliate the land-owners to a commutation, by bringing in the mercantile classes. "It were infinitely better than the present universal system of taxation on commodities, that there should be an income tax, although it did include the mercantile along with the landed classes. We believe the latter would pay all; but leaving this question to be settled afterwards between these two classes, there is another question more urgent still, and demanding an immediate settlement; we mean the question between the higher and humbler classes in society. An income tax on the former to the ostensible relief of the latter would wrest this most formidable weapon from the hands of demagogues."*

In concluding this branch of my subject, I will advert very briefly to a question of immense practical importance, elucidated by Doctor Chalmers. This is the national debt of this country. He unfolds the terrible evils of the funding or borrowing system, and demonstrates conclusively, that it has had the practical effect of doubling the amount charged as debt. But loans for the purpose of carrying on a war, are more popular than the same amount raised within the year by taxes, just because the people do not perceive that "this double mischief is disguised."

He proves that when government borrows a large sum of money, the amount in the first instance is advanced by

* P. 545 —The proposal of an income tax by Dr. Chalmers in 1832, as a beginning of a commutation of taxes on consumption, was wise and well-timed, as the country at that time was in comparative prosperity, and the exhilaration of spirits caused by the Reform Act would have reconciled the people to the burden. But the adoption of a tax on "*income*" of the industrious classes in 1842, was ill-advised and ill-chosen as to time. Every day's experience has proved that it has caused as much distress to the labouring people by the contraction of demand for labour, as it has increased the loss and added to the annoyance of the classes subject to it

capitalists out of their capital, and that prices generally rise, so as to cover or replace to the capitalists the amount abstracted from their capital, and transferred to government. The amount is nominally raised from the money-holders, but in fact, it is raised from the public, and raised too within the year by the general rise of prices. But the amount is added to the debt—and must be *again* paid back, or the interest remains a perpetual burden on the country. A loan raised of £20,000,000, remains a perpetual load, and the advance of prices to the same amount makes the total £40,000,000.

The debt of £500,000,000, which the French revolutionary war left behind, and which is now requiring £20,000,000 a year to be raised by taxes on corn, malt, sugar, tea, and other necessities consumed by the people, was actually paid *in high prices* between the years 1793 and 1815. This demonstration by Dr. Chalmers, of the doubling of the debt, also doubles the responsibility of the authors of that war and of its system of finance.

The corn-laws, by fixing the price or rent of land, at the average rates current during that period of twenty-three years, have actually had the effect of adding a third amount, equal to the debt, on the industry of the people of this country.

In favour of a graduated property-tax, there is an ancient constitutional or historical prescription of the land. The customs and laws of former ages established, not only the gradation of ranks, but also of fines for offences, and proportions of taxes to be paid into the public treasury. In the Anglo-Saxon times, this principle of gradation was recognized in the tariff of fines fixed for the murder of a king at 30,000 thrymsas—of an earl or bishop at 8,000—of a thane at 2,000—and of a churl or slave at 260.

In the reign of Richard the Second, a poll-tax was laid on every man in the kingdom, in the following proportions: A duke or archbishop, £6 13s 4d each; a judge or chief baron, £5; a bishop or earl, £4; a baron, baronet, alderman, and mayors of large towns, £2; a knight, squire, or rich merchant, £1; a merchant in good circumstances, 13s. 4d.; a gentleman, or attorney at law, 6s. 8d.—of less estate, 3s. 4d.; a married labourer, 4d.; and a single man or woman, 4d.

Under Henry VI. the graduated principle* was acted on in the imposition of a property tax. Rents of lands and houses from £20 to £200 a year, had to pay 12d. in the

* The perfect reasonableness of a graduated tax on property, is obvious to every one who gives a moment's thought to the subject; and motions have been made in the House of Commons, for the introduction of a bill, to commute taxes on consumption, to a tax on property, but were negatived by the majority that is always opposed to measures for the relief of the industrious classes.

The last time that a fair attempt was made to effect this object was, on the 26th of March, 1833, by Mr Robinson, in his motion, that "a select committee be appointed with a view to a repeal of the taxes that press on industry, and the substitution of a tax on property to the same amount."—For the motion there were, votes 155; against it 221:—majority 66.

Mr. Buckingham afterwards took up the subject, and published a detailed plan of how the graduation should be made.—The plan and its details are very curious and interesting, and will no doubt acquire very shortly a great practical value, when the subject shall be taken up in earnest by the country and the legislature. The principles and details of his plan are contained in the *Parliamentary Review and Family Magazine*, 1833, volume I pages 569—589, to which I must refer for particulars.

In the journals of the day we find the same equitable principle of graduation in the amount of taxes recommended. "My suggestion is, that the Whigs, who have impoverished the public purse by little wars in Spain and China, and across the Indus, and by shameless commissions, by loss of revenue, and general imbecile administration—should be taxed 1s 4d. in the pound, and the Tories who resisted these ruinous measures, only 3½d in

pound—and all rents above £200 a year, paid 2s. in the pound.

the pound.”—Extracts of a letter signed “Aristides” in the *London Morning Herald*, 28th of March, 1842.

Admitting that in the China and Afghanistan wars, the Whigs did begin the fray, let them be taxed as the Tories recommend. But the *people* of this country must bear in mind to tax the Tories in proportion to the debt of about £700,000,000 incurred in *Big Wars*, which left no dollars behind them.

CHAP. VI.

ARISTOCRACY, OR MONOPOLISM, WOULD CHECK THE BOUNTY
OF NATURE, AND RESTRAIN THE COMMERCIAL INTER-
COURSE OF NATIONS

REFUTATION OF THE DOCTRINE THAT THERE IS NO ROOM AT NATURE'S
FEAST FOR A VAST PORTION OF MANKIND—NATURE NOT ONLY PROVIDES
FOOD FOR THE BANQUET, BUT EVEN SUPPLIES SEATS AND CONVEYANCES—
A FEW FACTS AND ARGUMENTS TAKEN AT RANDOM IN FAVOUR OF UNRE-
STRICTED COMMERCE BETWEEN COUNTRIES.

THE Creator has been charged with the responsibility of the destitution and misery of a great portion of the human race, in the doctrine of the modern school of economists, which asserts, that man increases in a ratio beyond the increase of food provided for him on earth! Against a doctrine so impious, all nature cries, No! It is man himself, who, through laws which betray a dulness united to a selfishness of feeling, inflicts the curse on his fellows. The means of subsistence are spread in abundance over the earth. Some spots have more and some less, but an exchange could be made to equalize the division. God covers the ground with vegetation—he puts the seeds in a

shape fit for transport to any region. He, by his distribution of land and water, invites man to exert his faculties, and improve the advantages placed at his hand. The stretching of the great continents and principal countries of the globe from north to south, and the direction of the chief rivers between those points, would instruct men, that Providence designed a mutual exchange of commodities, raised in the various climates between the equator and the poles.

Even within the limited space of the British islands, nature has given the elements of exchange—in fish from the Orkneys, and cattle from the Highlands of Scotland, for the wheat and the hops of Kent. How much more extensive is the space, and varied the productions, between Great Britain and Spain, America and Southern Asia ! The Euphrates, the Nile, the Indus, the Ganges, the Cambodia, the Volga, the Dnieper, the Rio de la Plata, the Mississippi, the St. Lawrence, are all prepared to convey the produce of countries under cold climates, to warmer regions near their mouths, or from warm to colder climates. The Amazon and the Orinoco rivers, and the great rivers of China, appear to be exceptions to this rule, but they really are not; for although their general direction is in one zone, yet as the level of the countries whence they issue, is so much higher than the regions through which the main streams flow, the productions of the higher countries are actually those of cold climates.

There will always be rich and poor on the earth; were it not so, a stimulus to active exertion would be wanting, and men would sink into passive machines. Poverty is a relative term; but a man is not poor, who, by the daily labour of his body or mind, gains sufficient wholesome food and raiment for himself and family. There is a very

sweetness in the food to which exertion has given an appetite.*

A government stands towards a people in the relation of a parent to his family, and if it neglect to provide the means of subsistence, or put obstacles in the way of the people procuring their food, that government takes upon itself a fearful responsibility.

According to the law of God and nature, no class or order of men, forming a government, have a right to tax the food of the rest of the citizens, in order to save their own property from taxation.

The proportion of the fruits of the earth demanded by Moses was a land or property tax, and nothing else; or it may be called the rent of the soil, paid to God as the proprietor. It formed the total burden of taxation, for the support of the worship of God, and for the general expenses of the government of the country.

Such is the stupifying effect of the avaricious disposition on legislators, that the laws of many countries excite, among impartial investigators, contempt for their authors. But the varied expressions, which the smiles of pity and derision give to the beholder, is soon overcast by the gloom which the fiendish spirit of those laws throws around.

The aristocratic sect of political economists, to whom reference has been made, turn round to millions of the

* In unison with the songs and warblings of birds, one of the most pleasing sounds in nature is the whistle of the ploughboy, heard in the calm of a summer's morning, thrilling over the field. Even in the neighbourhood of a crowded city, the stonemason, the carpenter, and other mechanics, will be heard singing, and with healthy faces proceeding to their daily labour. There is a compensating principle in nature. What contortions does the face of the philosopher present, when some circumstance forces a smile! Who ever heard a statesman whistle? Peel would fall into convulsions, were he to attempt to whistle any air more joyous than "*Begone, dull Care!*"

human race, and tell them that that there is no room for them at nature's feast ! But how can they thus impeach the wisdom and beneficence of the Author of nature, with their knowledge of the provision-laws made by dominant parties among the Spaniards, the Dutch, and the English !

The laws made by the aristocratic government of Spain decreed that the olive and the vine should be rooted out and destroyed from the soil of Mexico, and prohibited the cultivation there of every article that might interfere with the consumption of the productions of Spain.*

The colonial regulations established by the monopolizing government of Holland, condemned to destruction all the produce of their Spice Islands, that exceeded the limited quantities assigned for the markets of Europe, held under monopoly. The Dutch Spice Islands have been appropriately called the gardens of the earth, and nature is there most exuberant in her productions ; but man interposes his laws, and casts a blight on what he touches.

The sugar laws made by the colonial power in England are in principle precisely similar to the Spanish and Dutch decrees, for they are established to uphold a necessary article of consumption at an extravagant price, in order

To speak candidly, Spain has a long catalogue of national crimes registered against her, and to the philosophic investigator they stand out in colours which reflect on that country a deep shade. Among her other atrocities, she is indirectly responsible for the system of Buccaneering, established in the West India seas early in the seventeenth century. Many of the islands in those seas, which she did not consider worthy of her occupation, were settled by colonists from England, France, and Holland ; and in a spirit of spite she proceeded to harass and destroy those colonies. These measures of rigour rendered the settlers desperate, and, under the name of Buccaneers, they commenced a savage retaliation against the Spaniards and their settlements, and ultimately against the natives of other countries. In fine, an atrocious system of piracy sprang out of the retaliation inflicted on the Spaniards for their original wanton cruelties on innocent persons.

to enrich a few hundred families at the expense of millions of consumers.

But in another generation, what will mankind think of laws, made by a dominant faction, in islands with a dense population yearly increasing, prohibitive of the introduction of animal and vegetable food ! But truth is stranger than fiction, and the most extravagant imagination in the twentieth century, will fail to picture anything so monstrous as the British provision-laws, concocted by men deemed noble and wise, supported by men reputed the great statesmen of the age, and sanctioned by the high-priests of the nation.

It surely does not require the aid of political economy, to perceive the dull intellect that dictated such laws of the three European nations mentioned ; and to see how avarice, that tremblingly puts forth its withered hand to seize the bounty which Providence offers to all, fails in the attempt, and shrinks under the scowl of mankind, indignant at the pompous imbecility that so long has retarded the progress of nations.

Cupidity dictates the laws, and fear upholds them.

The supporters of the British provision-laws express their fears, that, were they to allow the importation of food into this country, and become dependent on foreign countries for supplies, the inhabitants might not receive sufficient quantities.

This reasoning would imply that we wanted foreigners to feed us on charity ; but it goes for nothing, so long as we have the means to pay for what we require in the shape of provisions.

Let it be always borne in mind, that reciprocal interest forms the grand bond of nations, as well as of individuals.

In another section of this work it has been stated, that

during the twenty years of the terrible European war, we received more corn into this country from foreign countries, than within any equal period before that event. We received the supply, notwithstanding our war with almost all the world, simply because we wanted the corn, and had the means to pay for it. And it would be so again.

These unnatural restrictive laws on the introduction of food were relaxed to a certain degree in the early part of 1842; and what was the consequence? Even the very discussion of the question stimulated enterprise from every country on the globe. As early as in the month of July of that year, the arrival of a vessel was reported at Liverpool, from Chili in South America, with a cargo of wheat, which, after a voyage almost equal to half round the globe, cost, in the port of discharge, including all charges and corn-law duty, about forty-eight shillings a quarter.*

There arrived in the port of London, on the 25th of September, of the same year, no less than twelve vessels loaded with grain, from eleven different ports—namely, from Trieste, Marseilles, Alexandria, Malta, Leghorn, Barletta, Odessa, Taganrog, Ibrail, Ancona, and Archangel, a vessel from each port, except Ancona, from which there were two vessels.†

Since the beginning of the world, the north of Africa has been the source of supply of bread-corn, for a great portion of the inhabitants of Europe. Egypt was the granary of ancient Rome, and it might be again the storehouse of nations. The fertility of the soil of the north-west corner of Africa, is perfectly inexhaustible; for on account of the unfailing supply of water for irrigation, from the lofty

* See extract from Liverpool papers copied into the London Journals of 6th or 7th July 1842.

† See the shipping report in the "*Times*" of the 28th of Sept. 1842.

ranges of mountains which surround the plains, the earth is made independent of the seasons, which in that zone are irregular in their fall of rain. The crops of wheat are sometimes so abundant as to lie uncut, and rot on the ground.

In the north of Europe, the powers of the soil give out such abundance of corn, that it is heaped up, exposed to the inclemency of the weather.

The account of the resources of North America, is becoming an oft-repeated tale; and all travellers describe with wonder the prolific nature of the earth there. Mr. Buckingham, by some of his statistical details, buries the whole theory of Malthus and his school.*

The following is the report on the harvest of 1842.—“From every quarter of the country, we continue to receive the most gratifying accounts of an abundant harvest. The grain-crop is one of the largest ever grown in the United States, and generally is of superior quality. *The prospects however, of a market are gloomy.*”† The concluding remark

* I am indebted to Mr Buckingham for several facts stated in this section. At the present time, the people of this country, and of America, would do well to receive facts, and take advice, from his work descriptive of the History and Statistics of the United States. It is a work of great research and labour, and true in its descriptions, and will be referred to in after times, for detailed information of the condition of that country down to the time when it was composed. It is altogether original in its plan and execution, and as it was the fruit of three or four years' application in the country described, it contains a mass of knowledge for the instruction and entertainment of its readers. The writer of this note does not give hearsay opinions on this subject, and his opinion will have the more weight when he mentions that he twice visited the United States, once in the spring of 1825, and again in the summer of 1831, and observed the country on the eastern board, and the western part of the country from New Orleans to Quebec.

It is to be hoped that the Americans themselves will take lessons from it, and redeem, by their return to honest measures, their country from the disgrace which certain proceedings have thrown on it.

† From the letter by a Genevese traveller in the *Times* of 26th August, 1842.

in this passage echoes the sentiment already expressed, of the gloom which aristocratic laws throw over millions restrained from sitting down at nature's feast.

In every article of food, for the use of man, abundance can be found in one country, to make up the deficiency in another. We find reported, in March, 1842, from Liverpool, that a quantity of mutton-hams, imported from Buenos Ayres, was lying rotting in the Custom-house, in consequence of the prohibition of introduction. The cost of this mutton was stated at about 2d. a pound, including freight, and charges of transport from the plains of the Pampas. By the latest accounts from Cincinnati, on the Ohio, in the Western States of America, good fresh beef was selling in the market at one cent, or an English halfpenny, per lb: and wheat of the finest quality at 25 cents, or one shilling and a halfpenny, per bushel!

Offers have been made to import bones of beef at such prices as would answer for manure to land.

A mercantile house in Liverpool, in June, 1842, offered to the government of this country, three hundred tons of sugar, lying at one of the outports, (from Brazil,) at £15 a ton, equal to about 1½d. a pound; and if permission were granted to free it from the duty of 63s. a cwt. equal to 400 per cent on the prime cost, the importers would guarantee that the sugar should only be used for feeding pigs, or for manuring land! The permission was refused.*

A memorial to the queen in council was sent up from Sheffield, in 1842, requesting permission to receive American flour in payment of debts due from New York to Sheffield; and this reasonable prayer was also refused!

* See letter from Messrs. John B. Moore & Co. Liverpool, to Lord Ripon, President of the Board of Trade, published in the *Morning Chronicle* of the 20th of June, 1842.

While considering the idiotic effect of the fiscal laws of certain countries, one cannot help alluding to the extraordinary circumstance of coals from Newcastle in England, being cheaper in Lisbon, Gibraltar, or Buenos Ayres, than in the city of London. But such will be found to be generally the case.

In concluding this part of the subject, it is consoling to think that there is to be found, amidst the misery of our general population, the impartiality of the law-makers, in subjecting themselves to the self-same fiscal regulations imposed on the people !

The most influential holder of estates in Jamaica must pay the same duty on his sugar as the humblest individual in the country: and Wellington, powerful though he be, cannot import one bullock from his princely domains in Spain, or one bushel of wheat, freed from the law that he imposes upon himself !

The country must rejoice in the equal justice of its laws, which fix the same rate of duty on the beefsteak of the Duke, as on that of the coalheaver !

CHAP. VII.

ARISTOCRATIC WEALTH AND NATIONAL MISERY—RETRIBUTIVE TAXATION, OR SOCIAL CONVULSION.

PRINCIPLES APPLIED TO PERSONS—SYNOPSIS OF NATIONAL WEALTH AND INCOME—GRAND RESULT SEEMS WHOLESOME—BUT WHEN CAREFULLY EXAMINED, SOME FATAL ERROR IS DISCOVERED, IN THE CALCULATIONS TOUCHING THE LABOURING CLASSES—INEQUALITY OF THE LOAD, AND INFERIORITY OF QUALITY, COMPARED WITH THE WEALTHY CLASSES—ANALYSIS OF THE BRITISH FISCAL SYSTEM—BALANCE STRUCK BETWEEN RICH AND POOR—RESTITUTION IS NOT CONFISCATION.

THIS chapter will consist of the details of facts, and of the application of principles to the circumstances of individuals. It will have quite a practical tendency, and will come home to the interests of rich and poor. There will be no discussion on the "*Rights of Man*"—that abstract and impracticable subject, which has frightened men from their propriety, and ended in results so unsatisfactory to the rights, privileges, and liberties of individuals. But the discussions in this section will have a direct reference to the rights of men, women, and children, natives and citizens of the British Islands.

The present position of this country is critical, and there can be no mistake respecting the tendency of passing events and occurrences. The moving principle, or law of society, is in full and active operation, and men must now

look at futurity with calmness and resolution, and be prepared for great changes. The middle classes of this country will require to put forth their well-established energies, and on the electoral portion of this class depends the safety of the empire. They cannot now halt between two opinions, and they must decide between being made the victims of a social convulsion, or the saviours of their country, by instituting a system of retributive taxation. The question is one merely of time. It is assumed, that the vast accumulation of wealth in the hands of the privileged legislative class, has been made from the partial and severe taxation of the people; and it is proved incontestably, that this heavy and unjust load of taxation presses down in misery the body of the industrious citizens. Therefore, as partial taxation has caused the distress and decadence of the nation—retributive taxation is the only safe and constitutional course to be pursued, for the deliverance from the misery which exists and the danger which threatens.

The statistical statements and facts, adduced in support of the position taken in this branch of the subject, are arranged without strict regard to their connection with each other; but they must stand for themselves, and the inferences and reasonings therefrom be judged accordingly.

A comprehensive view will be first given of the state of the property in Great Britain and Ireland, taken at three different periods, by three writers on the statistical condition of the British empire. These estimates of the resources of this country were severally made by Mr. Colquhoun in 1812—Mr. Lowe in 1822—and Mr. Macqueen in 1832.

In 1812 Mr. Colquhoun estimated, as under, the property in the empire, taken in round numbers :—

Cultivated lands, gardens, and orchards	-	£1,200,000,000	
Tithes belonging to the Laity	-	80,000,000	
Mines and minerals	-	75,000,000	
Canals, tolls, timber	-	50,000,000	
Dwelling-houses, not included in the rent of land.	-		
Warehouses	-	400,000,000	
Manufactured goods in warehouses and shops	-	140,000,000	
Foreign merchandise in ditto	-	40,000,000	
British shipping	-	27,000,000	
Animals, horses, cattle, sheep, hogs	-	183,000,000	
Agricultural property of all kinds	-	45,000,000	
Fisheries	-	10,000,000	
			<hr/>
<i>Unproductive property</i>	-	Total productive property	£2,250,000,000
Waste lands	-	£132,000,000	
Household Furniture	-	185,000,000	
Wearing apparel	-	20,000,000	
Plate, jewelry	-	44,000,000	
Specie, dollars	-	15,000,000	396,000,000
			<hr/>
<i>Public property—</i>			£2,646,000,000
Buildings, churches, bridges	-	£27,000,000	
Arsenals, castles, &c.	-	17,000,000	
Dock-yards	-	10,000,000	
Ships of war	-	25,000,000	
Ordnance	-	10,000,000	89,000,000
			<hr/>
<i>Colonial dependencies—</i>			£2,735,000,000
In Europe	-	£22,100,000	
In North America	-	46,500,000	
In West Indies	-	100,000,000	
In Conquered Colonies	-	75,000,000	
In Africa	-	4,770,000	
In Asia	-	38,700,000	287,070,000
			<hr/>
<i>India under the East India Company</i>	-	-	£3,022,070,000
			1,072 400,000
			<hr/>
Total property			£4,094,470,000
			<hr/>
1812.			
Property annually created in Great Britain and Ireland :—			
Agricultural—Grain	-	£73,731,000	
Hay, grass	-	89,200,000	
Turnips, potatoes	-	29,000,000	
Gardens, orchards	-	2,850,000	
Butter, cheese	-	5,000,000	
Timber	-	2,000,000	
Wool	-	5,159,000	
Hemp	-	4,500,000	
Hops	-	1,300,000	
			<hr/>
			£212,740,000
All other things	-	4,000,000	
			<hr/>
			£216,740,000

				Brought forward	£216,740,000
Mines and minerals	-	-	-	£9,000,000	
Manufactures	-	-	-	114,200,000	
Inland trade	-	-	-	31,500,000	
Foreign trade and shipping	-	-	-	46,370,000	
Coasting trade	-	-	-	2,000,000	
Fisheries, exclusive of Newfoundland	-	-	-	2,100,000	
Banking	-	-	-	3,500,000	
Foreign income	-	-	-	3,000,000	211,670,000
All other sources	-	-	-	-	2,110,000

Total value of Property produced annually - - £430,520,000

Divided as under

Productive Classes and Labourers.

	Families.	Persons.	Income.
Agriculture	1,302,000	6,129,143	£107,246,000
Trade, manufactures shipping, and Fisheries.	1,506,770	7,071,900	183,908,000
Fine Arts	5,000	25,000	1,400,000
	<u>2,813,770</u>	<u>13,226,043</u>	<u>292,554,000</u>

Unproductive Classes.

	Families.	Persons.	Income.
Royalty and nobility	47,437	416,835	£58,924,000
State, army, revenue, and navy	152,000	1,056,000	34,036 000
Clergy, Law, Physic	56,000	281,500	17,580,000
Universities, Schools	45,319	567,937	17,555,000
Paupers	387,100	1,548,400	9,871,000
	<u>687,856</u>	<u>3,870,672</u>	<u>137,966,000</u>
Total	<u>3,501,626</u>	<u>17,096,715</u>	<u>430,520,000</u>

In 1822, the estimate made by Mr. Lowe, did not materially differ from that of Mr. Colquhoun, ten years before. It is not therefore necessary to give details of his statements. The prices in 1822 were considerably lower than in 1812, but, from the increase in the population, the production raised was greater. The value of property created, Mr. Lowe estimated at £350,000,000, without including hay and forage for animals, which Mr. Colquhoun took in his account at £89,000,000, and deducted from the gross amount of £430,520,000, leaving £341,520,000.

In 1832, Mr. Macqueen gave the general recapitulation of his estimates as follows :—

<i>Immoveable Property,—</i>				
Land	-	-	-	£2,316,922,940
Houses	-	-	-	604,733,278
Funds—Banks	-	-	-	932,000,000
Canals—Railways	-	-	-	118,000,000
				<hr/>
				£3,971,656,218
 <i>Moveable Property—</i>				
Furniture, apparel	-	-	-	£975,874,277
Farmers' Stock	-	-	-	654,833,730
Capital in manufactures	-	-	-	201,000,000
Stock in warehouses and shops	-	-	-	350,000,000
Capital in ships	-	-	-	33,573,032
				<hr/>
				2,215,281,039
				<hr/>
Grand total in Great Britain and Ireland	-	-	-	£6,186,937,257
				<hr/>
Public property estimated at	-	-	-	£110,000,000
				<hr/>
Value of the land estimated at	-	-	-	£2,316,922,940
Deduct the value of the National Debt	-	-	-	772,196,849
				<hr/>
Net value of land	-	-	-	1,544,726,091
				<hr/>

Estimate of property annually created

From Agriculture	-	-	-	-	£474,029,688
Houses	-	-	-	-	40,929,940
Ships	-	-	-	-	44,470,061
Manufactures	-	-	-	-	262,085,199
Funds, Banks	-	-	-	-	35,000,000
Horses, Carriages	-	-	-	-	13,500,000
Canals, Roads	-	-	-	-	12,000,000
					<hr/>
Total Great Britain and Ireland	-	-	-	-	£882,015,788
					<hr/>

General Table of the Income of all classes of the people of Great Britain and Ireland.

Income of proprietors of land	-	-	-	-	£74,911,525
Income from tithes, manors	-	-	-	-	13,279,253
Income from farmers' capital at £5 per cent	-	-	-	-	32,841,686
Income from additional produce beyond charged	-	-	-	-	15,893,757
Wages, directly paid in agriculture	-	-	-	-	135,000,000
Wages, directly paid in mines and fisheries	-	-	-	-	26,000,000
					<hr/>
Total	-	-	-	-	£297,926,221

	Brought forward	£297,926,221
Income from houses, - - -	£40,929,940	
Income from funds, savings-banks, -	35,000,000	
Income from canals and railways, -	12,000,000	
Income from horses, carriages, - -	13,500,000	
Income from classes under Income Tax D.,	51,575,446	
Income Army and Navy, - - -	22,000,000	
	<hr/> 175,005,386	
Wages, paid directly in manu- } facturing of all kinds, }	£130,000,000	
In ships, outfit, - -	25,000,000	
Female servants, food and } wages, - - - }	27,708,380	
Male do - - -	7,418,810	
Wages to all other mechanics, } artisans, coopers, masons, }	59,400,000	
blacksmiths, &c. -	<hr/> 249,528,190	
		424,533,576
1832. Total annual income of all classes of society,		<hr/> £722,459,797
The yearly consumption or expenditure of all classes is estimated as follows.		
Of agricultural produce, - - -	£295,479,166	
Of produce of manufactures - - -	262,088,199	
Of rental of houses - - -	40,929,940	
Of imports of foreign goods - - -	55,000,000	
	<hr/> £653,494,305	
Deduct the declared value of exports—	51,494,305	
	<hr/> £602,000,000	
Add gross amount of public taxes, -	51,000,000	
Ditto of local taxes, tithes, poor-rates,	16,000,000	
	<hr/> £669,000,000	
Estimated expenditure of all classes of society, - -		£669,000,000
Estimated value of the income of all classes, - -		722,459,797
		<hr/>
Estimated saving, or annual increase to the } national capital, - - - - }		£53,459,797

From the foregoing statements we have the following results:—

In 1812 the population was	17,100,000	Annual expenditure,	£430,520,000
In 1832 do.	24,500,000	do. do.	669,000,000
	<hr/> Increase in 20 years,	7,400,000	<hr/> £238,480,000

The increase of the population in the 20 years was about $43\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

The increase in the annual consumption was about $55\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

These statements of population and consumption represent, *on paper*, a very wholesome condition of society; and is it possible, that, within these last ten years, ruin has been so rapid, as to leave the country in a state of the most fearful exhaustion, and the population actually dying in thousands, by the slow decay of hunger!

Particular attention is requested to the foregoing calculations by two experienced statistical writers; and, comparing their statements with the actual fact of the condition of this country within the last twenty years, it will be perceived, that there is either some gross error in extending the figures of calculation, or else some fatal principle is at work on the very vitals of the country.

The foregoing estimates of the property and annual incomes of the various classes of British citizens, are founded, in the greater part, on assumptions, and are consequently fictitious in their results. They form very curious tables, and display much ingenuity and labour in the calculators. But they represent things rather as they ought to be, than as they really are. They may be compared to those arithmetical computations of how many thousands of miles eight hundred millions of sovereigns (the amount of the national debt) would extend, if placed in a row. The computation may be mathematically correct; but, as there are not, on the whole globe, eight hundred millions of sovereigns, the calculation can be of no practical use.

In estimating the value of the resources of Great Britain, the calculators referred to, assume that there exists a fair and equal balance of interests, and public burdens are so adjusted, and impartially laid on the several classes of the people, that each bears its proportion and no more.

No allowance is made, or even an allusion pointed, to inequality in the proportion, to partiality in the division, and

to injustice in the distribution. Many adverse influences and destructive forces may cross and sweep the land, and no notice be taken of them in those pictures which exhibit wealth, splendour, national power, with all their accompaniments of fleets and armies, as the characteristics of the country. There is no denying, that these circumstances of individual riches and magnificence, and of national greatness, do exist in this country; but, in these dazzling rolls of national wealth, why is it that we have to look for the possessors of four-sevenths of the annual income, in the dark abodes of poverty, of destitution, and misery!

In the statement formed by Mr. Macqueen, there appears to be an annual income to all classes of the community of	£722,459,797
And the annual expenditure is made to be	669,000,000
Making a yearly saving, or addition to the capital of the country, of	£53,459,797

In this it is assumed, that each class of society receives its due proportion of income, to enable it to defray its expense for the year. By the way, a saving of only seven and a half per cent on the gross income is small. A person in a trade or profession, or even a fixed annuitant, would not be content with such a limited addition to his savings at the end of the year. Considering the circumstances of this country, it would seem as if a great portion of its inhabitants are actually living out of their capital.

However, in such rough estimates of national property and income, there is something to be learned in the way of comparison, of what ought to be the true state of the case. Unfortunately for this country, there can be no mistake, even to the fraction of a penny, in ascertaining the amount of the public debt, and the taxes which are required to pay

its interest. It is also an easy matter to ascertain the actual value of land, tithes, mines, canals, railways, houses, and such like property—for, by multiplying the annual rentals and produce by so many years' purchase, the present value of the property can be ascertained.

Dr. Chalmers proves that the national debt is precisely similar to a mortgage on the lands of the country; and by applying to Mr. Macqueen's statement, we find that the debt is just about one-third of the value of the lands; which thus afford ample security to the national creditor.

Mr. Macqueen also estimates the income derived from lands to be	£74,911,525
From tithes and manors	13,279,253
	<hr/>
	£88,190,778
The interest of the national debt is	28,553,680
	<hr/>
Leaving a net revenue from the land of	£59,637,088

Dr. Chalmers recommends to commute all taxes on consumption into a tax on the rents of lands; and, to begin with—let malt, sugar, tea, and provisions of every kind, be liberated from fiscal power, and a tax of twenty per cent be imposed on land. Why should the British system of taxation act like “a curse equal to the barrenness of the earth, and the inclemency of the heavens?”*

Supposing that the estimates made by Mr. Colquhoun and Mr. Macqueen, are only distant approximations to the true state of the amount and distribution of the national wealth, it strikes one with astonishment to perceive what a great proportion of the annual income belongs to the industrious and labouring classes.

* Smith on the Wealth of Nations

Mr. Macqueen estimates the amount of wages annually paid to

Agricultural and mining labourers, at .	£161,000,000
Manufacturing and maritime labourers .	155,000,000
Artisans and all other mechanics . . .	59,000,000
Domestic servants	35,000,000
	<hr/>
	£410,000,000

Mr. Colquhoun divides the annual income of the nation into £292,000,000 from the productive classes, and £137,000,000 from all other classes.

From these statements, let us proceed to deduce the fiscal and political consequences to the vast bulk of the inhabitants of this country. With respect to the political bearings of the question, we have the majority of numbers in receipt of four-sevenths of the annual income of the nation, absolutely helpless and prostrate under the feet of the dominant party in the country. Their property, their liberties, and their very existence, lie at the mercy of laws made by a small section of the inhabitants ; and here is a fearful illustration of the fact of the political power of an Aristocracy, being founded on the direct control of the subsistence of many millions of active and intelligent men.

It rests with the electoral body in this country to remove this monstrous evil, and to restore to every man in Great Britain and Ireland, the right of giving a simple vote to send a man to the legislature, to protect himself, his wife, and his children, from the effect of partial laws ! Can the most timid mind really perceive any danger in imparting such a right ? There is none. By imparting this right, it is doing only an act founded on the eternal principles of justice.*

* The greater the number of persons interested in any establishment, or joint-stock company, the more solid is its foundation, and consequently

But fiscal extortion and political power are so connected together, that it is impossible to separate them. We shall find this in every law passed by the British legislature. What a scope for insidious spoliation is presented by the immense amount of circulating wealth within the British dominion! The analysis of the system of taxation established in this country, unfolds the principle of evil in every part of it. An amount equal to half the national debt, annually circulates, or ought to circulate, as wages of labourers, who are made the prey of every party in the country; and the taxes on their consumption reach them, charged with interest of money, and expenses, which in effect nearly double the rate, or, in another way of explaining it, reduce their wages to the limit of starvation. A reduction of the comparatively trifling sum of one shilling a week in the wages of labourers in this country, would amount at the end of the year to about fifteen millions of pounds sterling.

the greater security does it offer to the public Will any person please to take the trouble to explain why the same result should not follow from an increased number of citizens having an indirect interest in the government of the country through representatives chosen by these citizens? An appeal is made to the good sense of the Scotch electors on this subject, which is illustrated by the admirable system of joint-stock banking established in Scotland, held forth as a model for other countries.

In the *Times* money-article of 15th Nov. 1842, there is this quotation from the bankers' circular, "We are firmly of opinion that Scotland is suffering much less at this trying juncture than England, and that because the banks protect and identify themselves more with the people than the English banks "

The national debt itself confirms this statement, In 1834 there were 189,312 proprietors, of whom the large number of 173,324 were claimants on the country for less than one hundred pounds a year each.

When the toll on Waterloo Bridge was lowered for foot-passengers, from one penny to a halfpenny, there were 2,086,296 more persons passed in the year; and the revenue was only about 7 per cent less, after the rate had been

There is a sliding scale of the most horrible nature in the fiscal operations, for the pressure actually falls with a severity in the inverse ratio to the ability to bear it. This has been demonstrated, till the very clearness of the proof has contributed to the continuance of the evil, by making the minds of men callous and indifferent to it. The public revenue from taxation is raised chiefly on consumption, and the most powerful and wealthy man in the kingdom pays his share almost solely as a consumer, and therefore contributes little more in proportion than a man of an income of a few hundred pounds a year. Hence the geometrical accumulation of property in the hands of certain classes, while the effect on industry and labour is to curtail and diminish profits and wages.*

Before proceeding farther with these observations, it may be well to explain, that the design of them is not to attack property, or to hold up in strong and irritating contrast the circumstances of the rich and poor. But the question is between the exemption of property from its just share of public burdens, and the pressure of those burdens on the poor through the indirect taxation of their food. As long as a man can hold his pen, he must never cease to hold up this fact to the attention of his readers. Wealth has, and ever will have, a powerful and irresistible influence over this world, and everything which this world contains. And, in the abundance and superior quality of articles, to which the desires of men give value, it will have the advantage over poverty. Such being the case, it is positive robbery of the poor to give to property, or rather to the

* The estate-agents in extensive business experience comparatively little difficulty in finding purchasers for landed properties of the value of £50,000 £60,000, or 100,000, but properties of £3,000 to £10,000 value hang long on hand, as they are beneath the notice of men who are accumulating money to a large amount every year or two.

possessors of it, a preference to an easier carriage of the taxation necessary to support the government of the country.

The severity of the fiscal exactions are proverbial in this country, but, as the subject is rather abstruse, the classes of the people, upon whom the load falls heaviest, are not aware of the nature of the system. Like everything else connected with our system, there is a guise which covers the hideousness of it. The fallacy consists in the seeming equality of our laws for both rich and poor; and the supporters of things as they are, argue in this way: "We should be glad to know, whether the landlords do not consume tea, coffee, sugar, meat, flour, ale, and brandy, as well as the labouring man, and whether they do not pay precisely the same taxes upon them? If they do, we cannot see how the circumstance that a labourer (William Gladstone) being taxed more in proportion to his income, affects the question, whether the landowners have not to bear a greater amount and number of taxes than the owners of other description of property."*

Did the landowners pay a higher, or even as great an amount of taxation, as the owners of other property, why do they not state the circumstances of their greater burdens? But it is not true that land pays any tax at all, that may be properly called a land-tax, for the tax so named is raised, it is presumed, as much from ground within towns as from cultivated soil.

It has been already shown that the amount of what is called the land-tax, is only about two per cent on the gross revenue raised for the public expenses.

With regard to poor's rates, and other local charges, the land does not pay more in proportion than houses in towns

* Leading article of the *Times*, 21st Feb 1842

and cities. An opportunity was afforded to the landowners in the parliamentary session of March, 1842, to state their claims; but, instead of coming forward manfully, they negatived a motion for inquiry into the particular burdens on land, by a majority of 230 to 115. This was quite conclusive of the fact, that as *landowners* they contribute little or nothing to the public taxes.* Now, as consumers, it is manifest that they do not pay more than the same number of any other class of citizens who consume as much.

So that these landowners and legislators receive, in every mouthful that they swallow, full value for the tax which they pay on commodities; and the bulk of the citizens must, by their consumption, raise funds for the whole machinery of government, to uphold and protect the lands and other properties of the law-makers.

On this subject there is a fatal and melancholy infatuation in the minds of the people of this country—and, on asking men of intelligence, and great experience of the business of life, why such a partial and monstrous system should continue to exist, the answer, generally made in a tone of surprise, is to the effect, that “we could not expect that the legislators would tax themselves!”

Taxes on consumption of food, although the rate be nominally the same on the rich and the poor, actually fall on

* As this chapter is passing through the press, an opportunity is afforded of alluding to a second challenge to the landowners to produce their special burdens, which they declined to accept. Mr Ward, on bringing forward on the 14th March, 1843, his motion for a special committee, to inquire whether there were any peculiar burdens especially affecting the landed interests, remarked, that “he was opinion, that inquiry would show a case of exemption on the part of the landed interest without parallel in the history of the world” For the very reasonable proposal of an *inquiry* only, the votes were—Against the inquiry, 232, for it, 133—showing a majority against it of 99.

the latter with a severity many times greater than on the former. Taking the two extremes of very rich and very poor—the first scarcely perceives or feels the tax on his consumption, while the poor abject man pays the fiscal charge with his very sweat and blood. And, between the lowest and the highest point of the scale of income, the pressure of the tax is felt lightly or severely according as the income rises or falls.

In the abode where royalty itself dispenses the domestic hospitality of an empire to the representatives of every potentate on the globe, and to foreign and domestic princes, the annual consumption is, of

Bread,	-	-	-	value	£2,300
Butcher's Meat	-	-			10,000
Poultry	-	-	-	-	4,200
Fish	-	-	-	-	2,100

The taxes on provisions in this case must be items scarcely felt at all; and so it will be found in the establishments of those individuals who form the laws to uphold this system.

The provision-laws, which are so obstinately maintained by the powerful, contain within themselves principles to destroy a people. The prince and the peasant are alike subject to the laws regulating the duties on food imported into the British islands—on corn from Poland, Morocco, or America—on sugar from the East and West Indies—on tea from China—on coffee from Demerara—on brandy from France—and on oil, fruit, and wine from Spain. But the legislators become their own importers of the very articles on which they levy exorbitant duties. They commission their brokers, or send their stewards, to despatch from the Custom-House in the London Docks,

their quarterly or yearly supplies of every foreign luxury required for their families. They thus get the articles of the best quality, in the soundest condition, at the wholesale prices, and the duties charged without interest. But before the mass of consumers in the country can receive their respective supplies, many hands must interpose between the importation of the goods, and their delivery to the thousands of families waiting for them. The adulteration of most of the articles of foreign produce consumed in this country, is a matter too practically known to every careful mother of a family. Sugar, tea, coffee, cocoa, rice, fruit, and the luxuries of wine, spirits, and tobacco, reach the industrious classes of the land, deteriorated in quality, and sold at prices augmented with commission, interest of money, and profits of many dealers between the importer and consumer.*

* *Adulteration of Food and Loss of Revenue.* A volume has been written on the frauds practised on food. The following is the copy of the comprehensive title-page of a Work, written in 1822 or 1823, with the ominous motto "*There is Death in the Pot.*"—"A Treatise on Adulteration of Food, and Culinary Poisons. exhibiting the fraudulent sophistications of Bread, Beer, Wine, Spirituous Liquors, Tea, Coffee, Cream, Soap, Butter, Coals, Confectionary, Vinegar, Mustard, Pepper, Cheese, Oil, Pickles, and other articles employed in domestic economy; and methods of detecting them. By Frederick Accum, Operative Chemist, Lecturer on Chemistry, &c." Addressed to His Grace the Duke of Northumberland. It is to be hoped that His Grace will really now begin to pay some attention to these subjects.

In 1842 there were about 3,500 tons weight of chicory used in this country, on which there was comparatively small duty paid, in consequence of two-thirds of the quantity having been imported from British Colonies. This immense quantity of stuff, equal to 8,000,000 pounds weight, was mixed up and sold by retail to the labouring poor and destitute persons in this country, for coffee, at such prices as included the rates of import duty which would have been charged on genuine coffee.

This quantity, divided among our 4,000,000 of labouring families, will

This evil of unwholesome quality and high price, is familiar to every one who glances over a London morning newspaper, and can be traced to that exclusive scheme of taxation, which, by trying to save the property of the legislating party, throws the burden on the people, and, with the short-sightedness of avarice, is now risking the credit, and hazarding the safety, of the nation. Were it not for the misery which accompanies the transition, one might be disposed to smile at the embarrassment in which a dominant faction now finds itself, by the loss of revenue at the rate of five millions a year, while the demands on the Treasury remain undiminished.

give on an average 2 lbs each. It is to be particularly remarked in this calculation, that the poor and needy, as the consumers, are the only victims to this fraud, except the Treasury, which lost about £350,000 in the revenue, by chicory, in place of coffee, having been introduced into the country. Every family who can afford to keep a coffee-mill, escapes the fraud by purchasing the pure coffee in the bean; so that the helpless creature destitute of a coffee-mill, must swallow his two-penny-worth of chicory and trash. Eight millions pounds of chicory, sold for coffee at 2s. a pound, will realize £800,000; and this enormous sum is paid by our labouring classes, out of wages reduced to the lowest limits, under a system which thus cheats and almost poisons them. Let the people of this country mark the ignorance of common business-like calculation of results and probabilities which this system of legislation displays in the authors. After considering the subject, will any person venture to praise the equality of our laws, and maintain that the rich are subject to the same rate of duties on their food as the poor?

Comparison between the United States and Great Britain in the consumption of coffee :

	Population	Coffee	lbs.
United States,	17,000,000	50,000 tons	110,000,000
Great Britain,	26,000,000	12,600 "	28,000,000 " for Rich, }
		<i>Chicory</i> 3,500 "	8,000,000 " for Poor. }

United States—average for each person, $6\frac{1}{2}$ lbs coffee.

Great Britain—average for each person, $1\frac{1}{8}$ lbs coffee and chicory.

The analysis of our fiscal system shows, almost in every item, the same melancholy results, of the poor suffering in their comforts, while the rich escape. Cocoa is a nutritious and most palatable article, but its con-

The present embarrassments of the Treasury demonstrate, in the clearest and most melancholy way, the hollow nature of the fiscal system established in this country. The prophetic economic maxims of Adam Smith have been despised for two generations, until at the beginning of the third generation, young and old are convinced that "taxes on the necessities of life are a curse equal to the barrenness of the earth and the inclemency of the heavens." How short-sighted is cupidity, and how heavy is the sensibility of landowning legislators !

The danger of resting the revenue of a great empire on taxes on consumption, and of hazarding its safety by a failure of supplies, never struck the imagination of the authors of the scheme. Danger now stares them in the face, and they know not where to turn on discovering that

sumption is checked by some malign influence at work ; in 1840, the consumption was 950 tons—1841, 860 tons—1842, 880 tons. The quantities of coffee, chicory, and cocoa, are extracted from the circular of Messrs. Trueman and Cook, the extensive brokers, but the deductions and remarks are the author's.

In the article of sugar—the rich man enjoys the pure produce of the cane—the poor man must swallow a compound of sweetened trash, the rich man smokes a genuine Havana cigar, brought fresh to him from the original package—the hard-toiled man must try to lull his nerves with cabbage-leaves steeped in tobacco juice ; the legislator sips the finest-flavoured tea—the poor must complain of their hardships, and lament their injustice, over a cup of the decoction of sloe-leaves !

But the heart sickens over this subject, and searches in vain for the humanity and equity of British law of fiscal arrangement. It cannot be believed, that the results of such a system were foreseen by the framers of it—and it is believed, that a very small number of persons understand the real bearing of fiscal laws on the condition and happiness of a people. The humanity of our law-makers can only be saved at the expense of all those qualities of intelligence, information, judgment, and foresight, which a person may look for in the men who legislate for a great manufacturing and commercial nation.

there is a limit to the powers of consumption. Distress of the mass of the population causes this diminution of revenue; and this carries to the mind many melancholy reflections.

But independently of this involuntary diminution of consumption, other circumstances may combine, and do combine, to increase the difficulty of raising supplies. A change of taste—fashion—the operation of foreign tariffs—may cause a falling-off in the use of certain articles, on which taxes of custom or excise were formerly levied to a large amount. The keen eyes of fiscal calculators have discovered, that part of the deficiency of the revenue, down to the end of 1842, arose from a cessation of the introduction of port wine. But people can live without port wine; and what a miserable condition this country must be in, if it become dependent for its public revenue on the decrees of the wine-growing legislators of Portugal!

One most important cause of the decrease of the taxes on articles of consumption, is to be found in the spread of temperance among vast multitudes who formerly were slaves to whisky and gin. The cause of temperance among the bulk of the industrious and labouring classes, is of incalculable importance. Its consequences are physical, moral, and political. The physical effects are manifest, in the exchange of an intoxicating and deleterious drink for wholesome bread and other food—in improved health, and increased strength—in better clothing, and greater domestic comfort. The moral effects on the individual directly flow from the improvement in his circumstances; he has acquired *some* property by the change—he can educate his children, and can procure books for their instruction.*

* As if to impress on the minds of Governments the importance of cheap food to a people, an index is afforded by a law of nature, showing the rela-

The political consequences are equally important to the individual and the country; but they are not so readily perceived. The improvement of circumstances, and the superior intelligence of a class formerly poverty-struck and ignorant, raise the individuals in the estimation of the middle classes and electoral bodies, and give to them weight in times when aid is required to carry some great political measure. In 1831 and 1832, the artisans of Manchester, Glasgow, and Paisley were actually courted as political instruments by the party that was struggling to increase its power.

But the fiscal-political consequences of abstinence from high-taxed articles of consumption, are also important. If a million of revenue can be transferred from articles of consumption by the poor, to the property of the rich, a difference equal to two millions is gained to the formerly consuming classes—the same as if a pound-weight were taken from one scale and added to the other: the dimi-

tion between crime and scarcity of subsistence. The following is the moral sliding scale for five years in this country.—

1835	..	20,731	prisoners	....	39s.	4d	average price of wheat.
1836	..	20,984	„	....	48s.	6d.	„
1837	..	23,612	„	....	55s.	10d.	„
1839	..	24,443	„	....	64s.	7d.	„
1840	..	27,187	„	....	70s.	8d.	„

Debate in the House of Commons, May 24, 1842, Mr. Villiers' Speech.

There is another relation equally conclusive—namely, that between the price of wheat and the rate of mortality in a country. The law of the tides of the ocean scarcely appears more regular than that of bread and life. As the price of bread rises in a country, so increases the number of deaths, or, more correctly stated—as price rises, the average duration of life falls.

nished scale saves a pound and gains one at the same time.* There is therefore more in the act of abstaining from gin, whisky, and beer, than one at first sight is aware of.

It would be well that, for the next few years, the attention of persons who never gave a thought to such subjects should be particularly directed to matters of taxation, and to form calculations of how they interest and affect the various classes of society in this country. People would be astounded at the result.

Many details and curious statistical facts have already been published to the world. The official tables published quarterly, of the produce of the taxes, show the general bearing of the system. The amount respectively raised from the customs, excise, stamps, post-office, and assessed taxes, are stated in the accounts, and every labouring man now knows pretty accurately how much of the price of his sugar, tea, coffee, beer, and other articles, goes to the Treasury, to pay salaries of ministers of state, and all the other officers of government, down to the penny-post letter-carrier. But, besides those charges on his consumption,

* The deficiency in the revenue of *Excise* for 1842, for Great Britain was—

In malt and spirits	£1,040,000
Bricks	50,000
Soap	15,000
Auction and Post Horses .	40,000
Glass	160,000
Licenses	15,000
	<hr/>
	£1,320,000
The deficiency in the <i>Customs</i> was	824,275
	<hr/>
	£2,144,275

In the few articles on which there was an increase, the important article of sugar exhibited the paltry increase of £16,000 a year for a population of more than 26,000,000.

there are others that are quite invisible. The indirect charge made in the prices of butcher's meat, and of the 4lb. loaf of bread, is not so easily computed by him; but men who have paid great attention to these matters, have calculated that the laws, prohibiting the introduction of live cattle into this country, caused the price of meat to be two-pence higher than it otherwise would have been. This would cause an extra amount of about ten millions sterling to the consumers in the course of the year.

And an indirect taxation caused by the corn-laws, added a farther sum to be paid by the consumers, of about eleven million sterling.* As the poor of the land have to purchase their small supplies, from day to day, of dealers, who perhaps are the third or sixth remove from the original importers or merchants, the consequence is, that prices are artificially augmented by this process to a large amount. In round numbers, it was computed by the committee of the House of Commons on import duties, that about fifty millions were added to the price of food alone by the indirect operation of prohibitive laws.

These laws may be abrogated, but is the fund which they have added to the property of the makers of these laws, to remain untouched by the tax-gatherer?

Without being particular in the selection, a few cases, as they come to hand, will be here given, to show the effect of the present system of taxation on the living of the labouring man.

About twenty years ago, a labourer with his family spent on food alone about seven-tenths of his annual wages. In proportion as the income of families increased, the proportion paid for food became less: a family with an income of £250 a year, spent in provisions about £105—a good deal

* See Report on Import Duties 1840.

less than a half: a family with £500 spent in provisions about £165;* being about a third of the amount; and so on up to the landowner with his £100,000 a year. Taxes on food are absolutely not felt by a man whose provision-carts bring daily from his estates most articles of necessary consumption.

In 1792, the wages of an agricultural labourer at nine shillings a week purchased $10\frac{3}{4}$ gallons of flour. In 1841 the wages, supposing that the labourer got the same as in 1792, only procured 8 gallons of flour.* In these two simple facts is condensed the history of a nation's decline!

In September 1841 a petition was presented by William Blackstone of Birmingham, to the House of Commons, affirming that a quantity of bread, the cost of which was 14s. 6d., might be obtained for 5s. 11d. (a difference of 8s. 7d.) if there were no taxes on corn, no tithes, or other imposts on food.

In November 1841, it was proved in a debate in the House of Commons, that a poor washerwoman, out of 1s. $7\frac{1}{2}$ d. paid for groceries, had actually to pay indirectly $8\frac{3}{4}$ d. in taxes. A man who spent 16s. 6d. in groceries, paid 3s. 9d. as government-duty only. So that the washerwoman only got $6\frac{1}{2}$ d. for her 1s. and the rich man got $9\frac{1}{4}$ d. for his 1s.

A family with a weekly expenditure of £5 3s. 0d. has to pay in government taxes 11s. 11d.

Landlord's taxes - 24s. 2d.

West India planter's taxes 3s. 0d.—1 19 1

£3 3 11

* See Lowe's *State of England*, 1822, page 277 and [100.]

† *London Globe*, 2d November 1841.

From this statement it appears, that a family with about £250 a year, contributes about 25 per cent of it to augment the property of the legislating landowners and their colleagues, the proprietors of lands in Jamaica and Demerara.

The exact amount of duty may not be stated, but the principle is correct; and let the industrious middle classes of this country fix their attention on this calculation, which explains at one glance the cause of the accumulating wealth of the legislators, and the decaying resources of the hardworking tradesmen. Taking the amount of indirect taxes, that go into the pockets of the legislating body, at only 20s., on an expenditure of 100s. a week, equal to 20 per cent. on the annual amount, we shall have in 20 years £1,000 abstracted from the profits of trade, to increase in lands, houses, and public funds, the property of the hereditary aristocratic class of citizens! These are facts, and they must decide the argument.

The amount abstracted from the labouring classes, has been much greater in proportion, as will be perceived from the following case, laid before parliament on the 18th of February, 1842. The sufferer was named William Gladstone, a labourer, who earned eleven shillings a week, out of which he used one ounce of tea, two ounces of coffee, eight ounces of sugar, eight ounces of meat, eight pounds of flour, seven pints of ale, and one quarter of a pint of brandy. The cost of these articles free from excise and custom duties, was

	-	-	-	£0	2s.	4 $\frac{3}{4}$ d.
Excise and Customs Taxes			-	0	5	2 $\frac{1}{4}$
<hr/>						
				£0	7	7*

* This expenditure of 7s. 7d on food alone, out of weekly wages of 11s. nearly corresponds with the calculation made, on other principles, of about 7-10ths of the expenditure of the agricultural labourer being devoted to provisions.

So that this hard-toiling man, at the rate of 11s. a week, had to pay out of it in taxes, on his necessary food, about fifty per cent. of his wages.

A cry of distress is ascending from every corner of this country. An unfortunate pauper-girl is taken before a police magistrate to be charged with abstracting bread from the workhouse; and let Mercy listen to the piteous tale of the kind-hearted creature: "Gentlemen!—I had saved it from my own allowance, during the week, for my poor sister, who has less than me, is thrown out of work, and has neither father nor mother to pity her. I did not think there was any harm in pinching myself, to feed my sister." This girl was saved from the punishment fixed by law, on the condition of "not repeating her offence."

The difference between the prices of corn in this country, and in other countries, is much against us:—comparing London and Paris, in Feb. 1842, the price of the best wheat was 58 per cent. dearer in London—the best wheaten flour was $59\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. dearer. A man with £3 sterling, could purchase in Paris, 446 lbs of fine flour, and in London with the same money only 280 lbs. Bread in Paris was $5\frac{7}{8}$ d. the loaf of 4lbs.* In October, 1842, the prices of wheat were in London

$45\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. dearer than in Hamburg.†

$28\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. dearer than in Amsterdam.

$68\frac{3}{8}$ per cent. dearer than in Stettin.

The duty was at that time 18s. a quarter of wheat, equal to

$43\frac{5}{8}$ per cent. on prime cost at Hamburg.

$38\frac{1}{2}$ ditto on prime cost at Amsterdam.

$50\frac{3}{4}$ ditto on prime cost at Stettin.

£3 purchased eight bushels in London— $11\frac{4}{8}$ bushels in Hamburg— $13\frac{1}{2}$ bushels in Stettin.

* *Times*, 10th February, 1842.

† *Times*, 20th October, 1842

A complete analysis of the expenditure and taxation of the poorer classes, has been made by Mr. W. Hearn, and published in a very unassuming little pamphlet, which ought to be in the hands of every person in this country. I will take the liberty of extracting the compendium of the details of twelve families.*

	Persons.	Annual Expenditure	Taxation thereon	Government portion	Monopolists' portion	Benefit of Landed Interest	Indian and Colonial Interest.
1	3	£29 13 8	£12 11 4	£1 6 0	£11 5 4	£10 13 5	£0 11 11
2	6	52 6 6	22 4 2	2 6 4	19 17 10	19 0 6	0 17 4
3	4	49 6 11	19 16 6	3 19 1	15 17 5	14 7 8	1 9 9
4	4	41 16 4	17 17 6	1 12 6	16 5 0	15 3 4	1 1 8
5	6	74 15 0	32 3 6	4 0 2	28 3 4	26 19 6	1 3 10
6	6	98 3 0	40 14 8	7 4 1	33 10 7	30 11 0	2 19 7
7	9	101 5 10	42 9 4	4 4 6	38 4 10	36 3 8	2 1 2
8	8	87 10 8	37 14 0	4 9 11	32 4 1	30 8 10	2 15 3
9	4	52 19 6	23 12 4	2 13 1	20 19 3	19 11 8	1 7 7
10	6	76 2 1	28 1 2	4 5 7	23 15 7	21 6 10	2 8 9
11	6	89 1 0	33 17 1	4 18 7	28 18 6	26 13 0	2 5 6
12	7	110 16 6	40 11 5	8 1 5	32 10 0	30 2 4	2 7 8
	69	863 17 0	351 13 0	49 1 3	302 11 9	281 1 9	21 10 0

The details of the calculations are made up from personal knowledge of the families and their circumstances.

* To give an idea of the mode in which these calculations are made, we shall select the items of the weekly expenditure of families No. 1 and No. 12, the lowest and highest incomes—

No 1.

Six 4lb loaves at 8d.	4s 0d.	for the bread	2s. 6d.	for the tax	1s. 6d.
1½lb butter at 10d.	1 0½	„ butter	0 8½	„	0 3½
1lb. sugar at 7d.	0 7	„ sugar	0 1½	„	0 5½
2 oz. tea at 5s. per lb.	0 7½	„ tea	0 4½	„	0 3½
6 lbs. meat at 8d.	4 0	„ meat	2 0	„	2 0
7 pints beer . . .	1 2	„ beer	0 10½	„	0 3½
	11 5		6 7		4 10

Weekly Expenditure 11s. 5d.

Cost of Provisions . . . 6s. 7d.

Taxes direct and indirect 4 10 ——— 11s. 5d.

Yearly expenditure on food £29 13 8.

This family consisted of a mother and two boys under ten years of age.

Mr. Hearn concludes his observations by estimating the amount extorted from the labouring classes within the last twenty-five years. He takes 4,000,000 of families, at an average of 9s. 6d. a week, equal to £24 a year; out of which he calculates £8, or one-third, to go in indirect taxes to landowners and other monopolists.

4,000,000 families, at £24 £96,000,000

One-third is 32,000,000

At twenty-five years, during which the corn-laws have existed, the amount will be £800,000,000; this gives the sum of £200 extracted from labour of each family, toiling for twenty-five years to enrich an aristocratic body. Surely such statements as these will open the eyes of the middle and working classes to the gulf of ruin into which they are

No. 12

Nine 4lb. loaves at 8½d.		6 4½d.	for the bread 4s. 1½d.		for the tax 2s. 3d.	
20lbs. meat at 9½d.	15	10	„	meat 9 2	„	6 8
4lbs. butter at 1s. 2d.	4	8	„	butter 3 8	„	1 0
3lbs. cheese at 10d.	2	6	„	cheese 2 0	„	0 6
1lb. tea at 5s. 6d.	5	6	„	tea 3 3¼	„	2 2¼
1lb. moist sugar at 7d	0	7	„	sugar 0 1½	„	0 5½
3lbs loaf do. at 10d.	2	6	„	do. 1 1½	„	1 4½
14 pots beer at 4d.	4	8	„	beer 3 6	„	1 2
£2 2 7½			£1 7 0¼		£0 15 7¼	
Weekly Expenditure			£2 2 7½			
Cost of food			£1 7 0¼			
Direct and indirect taxes 0 15 7¼			£2 2 7½			
Yearly expenditure on food			£110 16 6			

This family consisted of seven persons.

Mr. Hearn published his tables in the summer of 1841. The prices given are those of that year. He says—"In conclusion, I beg to repeat, that these tables are not founded on supposition, but are an exhibition of the actual consumption and expenditure of the several families, all of which are known to the writer."

falling. These are realities, and not pictures of the imagination. The industrious classes are now driven to the very brink of a precipice, and they can only escape the destruction by firmly uniting, and *clinging to the soil* that gave them birth.

The sensibilities of mankind have been tortured by the exposure of the miseries of the mass of the British population, and the statistics of the taxation which grinds them to the earth, have been detailed with a minuteness which fixes the rate on the ounce of soap of the washerwoman, and on every mouthful of food consumed in her bare and desolate abode.

The reverse of this picture must now be presented, and the world must know, with an equal degree of certainty, the items of taxation on the wealthy and powerful of the land.

It stands on record in the House of Commons, that William Gladstone, a labouring man, is compelled to pay to the support of the Aristocracy and government of the country, about fifty per cent. out of his hard-won wages; and it will henceforth be the duty of fiscal writers, to ascertain how much Henry Vane, Duke of Cleveland—Hugh Percy, Duke of Northumberland—Walter Scott Douglas, Duke of Buccleugh—Robert Grosvenor, Marquis of Westminster—Richard Seymour Conway, Marquis of Hertford, and hundreds of others of high rank and property—have paid, do pay, and shall pay, as their contributions to the national burdens.

This is now the grand question at issue in this nation, between the mass of the people who support and pay all, and the dominant class who impose the burdens. This is a question of principle, and of hard facts applied to the circumstances of persons.

What are all practical questions in human affairs, but matters touching the interests of persons? "Abstract" political principles are regarded by the British legislature with much suspicion. Personal motives and interests make up the business of human life. The party who derive an immense personal advantage from the existing state of fiscal exactions from the people, labour to conceal the real demerits of the case, by attempts to represent it as a dispute between the wealthy owners of land, and the wealthy owners of cotton-mills and other manufactories, for political influence, and so forth. Against the intolerable evils of one-sided taxation, the land-owners set the miserable pittance of wages received by the labouring classes in the manufacturing districts, as if the wealthy masters cruelly cut down the rate of wages, and realized their wealth out of the labour of the persons employed. In such disputes and discussions, it is very easy to mistake the effect for the cause; at least, to mix them in such a manner, as to bewilder the persons who are the victims. Respecting the question of cotton-machinery, let the party answer—where would have been the race or generation of cotton-spinning labourers, had machinery for the working and spinning of cotton never been perfected? And why does it happen, in our statute-book, to find laws for the encouragement of that trade? and the raw material for it admitted into the country at a very moderate rate of duty? The law-makers were not cotton-spinners—but they believed, when they made the laws, that their own interests would be promoted by the extension of cotton-spinning; and they have most decidedly profited to an enormous amount by such extension. But they lacked that higher degree of wisdom, to balance the interests of a great nation; and they omitted, while they called into existence a new race of labourers, to

adapt the scale to the altered proportions of the population: that is to say, they encouraged cotton by a mere statistical duty, and prohibited the food which that encouragement demanded !

The introduction of the names of individuals, and the discussion of the great question as identified with them, may be objected to by many. But the hereditary legislators of this country are public characters, whose rights, privileges, and powers are as clearly defined by custom and law, as those of the sovereign himself; and their property, and titles, and prerogatives, are proper subjects of discussion, when the property and welfare of the citizens are encroached on by the laws made by the privileged order.*

The enormous wealth of a portion of this class of society, and its geometrical accumulation, are matters of publicity; and the source and action of this increase are to be found

* In the House of Commons, questions are discussed as personal ones. On the 4th of March, 1842, "a motion was made for a return of the names or firms of all occupiers of cotton, woollen, flax, and silk mills, or factories, who pay the wages of their work-people in goods instead of money; or who, directly or indirectly, by their partners, servants, or relations, supply goods or provisions on the truck system, and also the names of the places where such mills are situated." And to give a still more personal character to the affair, an amendment was added—"And also the names or firms of all occupiers of print-works, coal-works, and iron-works, who compel their workmen to reside in cottages belonging to their employers." These motions were very proper ones to be made, if there existed the slightest suspicion that the work-people were ill-treated, or defrauded of the smallest iota of their wages. Now this precedent may be followed by another motion "*for returns of the names or titles of peers, and all possessors of estates in land to the extent of — acres and upwards, showing the annual rent thereof, and the amounts which such peers or possessors pay, directly or indirectly, to support the government and institutions of the country—also returns of the value of public offices held by such persons—also of pensions out of public monies, received by relatives of peers—and estimates of the savings or profits realized by them from the corn-laws since 1815.*" and so on.

in the fiscal arrangements to which the inhabitants of this country are subjected. Common report assigns to the Duke of Sutherland a revenue of upwards of half a million a year; and so on, more or less, through the families and their connections, who make the laws for this great nation. It is said that the Marquis of Westminster, from the untaxed accumulations of ground-rents at the west end of London, is able to give to each of his granddaughters, one hundred thousand pounds.* If to the second generation he can give so much, his direct descendants must be enormously rich. It has been said that the late Bishop of Winchester died possessed of six hundred thousand pounds, amassed from the revenues of his see. The property of the late Duke of Cleveland, who died early in 1842, was thus stated in the London newspapers of the time.—The heir to the title and landed estates succeeded to an income of £80,000 a year; besides, there was left in the $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. funds, £1,250,000, affording a revenue of £43,000 more; the value of the plate and jewelry of the family was estimated at £1,000,000; and, in addition to this, were certain estates in Yorkshire, and a family-mansion in London, retained by the Dowager-Duchess; and it was also stated, that a large portion of the unentailed estates in Durham went to a granddaughter. The total may be estimated thus, as capital :

£80,000 from land, at 25 years' purchase,	£2,000,000
Money in the public funds,	1,250,000
Plate and jewelry	1,000,000
Other estates, houses, and other property, say	1,000,000
	<hr/>
	£5,250,000

* This fact is stated on the authority of the "Morning Post," of 29th August, 1842.

The income of the Duke of Sutherland would represent a capital of between twelve and fifteen millions sterling.

That of the Duke of Northumberland, at £250,000 a year, would form a capital of from six to seven millions.

The late Marquis of Hertford, a man who neglected and despised his country, and whose domestic establishment was formed entirely, it was said, of foreign menials, died possessed of such boundless wealth, apparently unknown in amount, that his executors offered a reward of ten thousand pounds for the recovery of certain bonds, said to have been abstracted by one of the foreign servants.*

The exposures made by the parties to this affair are among the most extraordinary in these times of extraordinary events and characters.

These few facts, relating to the properties of about half a dozen of men belonging to the hereditary legislators, will serve to convey an idea of the contrast that exists in the circumstances of the extremes of the classes of British citizens. The class of William Gladstones, pay, in direct and indirect taxation on their subsistence, £13 out of yearly wages to the amount of about £28.

We shall now proceed to ascertain what burdens of a fiscal nature fall upon a noble landowner, in possession of the comparatively moderate income of £100,000 a year. The estimate will be made in a very rough manner, for the sake of indicating the principle, and to more analytical pens must be reserved the task of filling up the sketch.

In the first place, the lands pass from the father to the son, or from the deceased to the heir-at-law, without any tax or duty being paid to the State on the transfer. A fine

* "It is said, that the late Marquis of Hertford, died worth nearly two millions of money." *Times*, 14th March, 1842.—See the London newspapers of October and December, 1842.

or duty of only £5 per cent. would give, every twenty or thirty years, the sum of £5,000, to help to relieve the burden of the labourer. The total amount of the land-tax is about £1,200,000, being equal to $2\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. on the gross amount of the taxes raised within the year, and to about $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on the gross rental of lands estimated at £75,000,000 a year.

The income of £100,000, will thus pay annually about £1,500. But, at the Revolution of 1688, the rate was from 10 to 20 per cent. on the rental. An income £100,000 from land, ought therefore to pay at least £10,000 to £15,000 a year—thus throwing on the William Gladstone's order of society £8,500 to £13,500, on this item alone. With regard to tithes, poor's rates, and other charges, no account is taken, as affecting the landowners more than the other classes of the population. One source of a most enormous accumulation of property in the hands of few persons, is in the system of building-leases in large cities. In this way, a great part of the city of London is gradually falling into the hands of some powerful families. The Grosvenors, Russells, Cavendishes, and others, will in another generation, have got possession of entire districts at the west-end of the town. Here is a legitimate and proper subject for taxation, and long before the expiration of the leases of most value, the nation will have taken a great decision on these and other vital subjects.*

With respect to taxes on consumption, these can only be

* In illustration of the above, take this instance. "The Duke of Bedford has already received from the Treasury, one hundred thousand pounds for the purchase of his property, to enable the commissioners to carry into operation the projected improvements by the extension of Oxford-street, in a direct line through the Rookery into Holborn." It thus appears that aristocratic, or exclusive power, stands in the way of every improvement in society.—*London Newspaper*.

ascertained by a rough process of approximation. Of course a man with £100,000 a year, does not eat and drink in proportion to his annual income, for, at this rate, he would consume about three thousand four hundred times more than William Gladstone. But suppose that we give a consumption of tea, coffee, sugar, meat, flour, ale, and brandy, to the extent of fifty times the quantity used in the family of the working man, we shall have £650 paid to the customs and excise, as taxes on the three first and two last-named articles; and to his own pocket, for the indirect taxes on meat and flour, say

-	-	-	£650
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To which may be added the amount of duties on			
wine, foreign brandies, fruits, and all other			
articles, say	-	-	450

Total on consumption	-		£1,000
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We now come to taxes purely aristocratical, and under this head we will assign a liberal and even princely establishment. From the tables of taxes, we take the maximum number of hores:

20 Horses at £3 6s. a year	-	-	-	£66	0	0
----------------------------	---	---	---	-----	---	---

50 Servants of all ranks and

degrees	-	-	-	£3 16 6 =	191	5	0
---------	---	---	---	-----------	-----	---	---

4 Carriages	-	-	-	7 10 0 =	30	0	0
-------------	---	---	---	----------	----	---	---

20 Dogs of all degrees	-	-	-	0 14 0 =	14	0	0
------------------------	---	---	---	----------	----	---	---

Armorial bearings	-	-	-	2 8 0 =	2	8	0
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Game duty	-	-	-	3 13 6 =	3	13	6
-----------	---	---	---	----------	---	----	---

Hair powder, for the beautification

of the curly locks of four foot-

men	-	-	-	-	-	1 3 6 =	4	14	0
-----	---	---	---	---	---	---------	---	----	---

			£312	0	6
--	--	--	------	---	---

Brought forward	312	0	6
The window duties are levied on other classes ; but			
the taxes on a house with 180 windows are	46	11	3
	<hr/>		
Total assessed taxes	358	11	9

The house duty was so shamefully evaded by the possessors of princely mansions, through means of low valuation of rental, that it was given up.* In summing up the burdens of the possessor of £100,000 a year, we have

Land tax	-	-	-	£1,500	0	0
Taxes on consumption	-	-	-	1,000	0	0
Direct taxes on articles of luxury and splendour	-	-	-	358	11	7
Total amount on £100,000 a year, equal to	<hr/>					
£2 16s. per cent	-	-	-	2,858	11	7

* The income tax of 1842, of £2 18s. 4d. per cent. is charged at the same rate on the industrious man, who, perhaps, without twenty pounds of property, gains his income of £151 by anxiety of mind, and labour of hands.

The foregoing statement will exhibit the balance of taxation between the hardworking man at £28 a year, and the noble duke at £100,000—namely, the difference between £3 per cent and 50 per cent. Such as it is, let the landowner have credit for the £2,858 11s. 7d. as his annual contribution to the support of the government established, be it observed, chiefly for the protection of property. But there is another view to be taken of the subject.

It has been demonstrated beyond a doubt, and is even

* "A fact has come to our knowledge, which is so monstrous, that it will scarcely be credited, but for the truth of which we can nevertheless vouch ; namely, that whilst the houses of persons in business in Bury, are assessed upon the rack-rent value of forty, fifty, sixty, and up to one hundred pounds a year, Rushbrooke Hall, the fine old Elizabethan mansion of the county member, is assessed at twenty pounds"—Extracted from the *Bury Post* newspaper, into the *Morning Chronicle* of the 4th of Feb. 1843.

admitted by members of the aristocratic party, that the laws charging a heavy duty on foreign corn are maintained to keep up the rents of land, by compelling the consumers to pay high prices for their bread.* It is also demonstrated, as accurately as calculations of this kind can be made, that the direct effect of those laws is, to add artificially to the prices of necessary food consumed in the United Kingdom, the amount of £20,000,000 a year; but, when augmented with profits of intermediate dealers, interest of money, and other charges, the increase is about £50,000,000 to the consumers.

But we will take the lower sum of £20,000,000 as the advantage which accrues to the landowners.

The number of cultivated acres in the British Islands is 46,522,000, so that the corn-laws have the effect of raising the average rent of land just 8s. 8d. an acre! The farmers, or what is called the agricultural interest, have really nothing to do with the question, for, when the corn-laws are abrogated, they will just get their farms at 8s. 8d. an acre cheaper than they now rent them. The farmers are as directly interested in the abolition of the corn-laws as the manufacturers. The saving by the fall of rent can be invested in the improvement of the lands, and hence will be an *increase* of produce which will more than make good the fall in the value of it in the market.

The gross rental of the lands is estimated at 75,000,000,† including the bonus derived from the operation of the corn-laws. This bonus is estimated at £20,000,000 equal in round numbers to about 25 per cent of the rental, leaving net £55,000,000.

Now, bring this to bear upon the income of the land-

* Lord Stanley, in one of his election speeches, admitted this.

† See Mr Macqueen's statements.

owner of £100,000 a year, and we get his proportion of the gain at £25,000 a year. His net rental ought to be only £75,000.

He pays taxes £2,858, and income tax £2,957 . £5,815

But he gains by corn-laws . . . 25,000

Net gain annually £19,185
accumulated after paying all charges to the State !

We have a direct proof of the correctness of the estimate of the enormous bonus which accrues to the owners of land from the taxation and prohibition of foreign corn, in the abatement which conscientious landowners make of their rents, due at the several quarter-days of the year. These abatements vary from 20 to 25 per cent. on the amount of the rents, and are generally announced in the newspapers in terms laudatory of the generosity of the landowners.

It has been demonstrated that labourers earning 11s. a week have to pay taxes on their food to the amount of £13 a year; and taking the half £6 10s.* as the proportion due to corn-laws, we shall have 3,846 labourers toiling and groaning under a load of taxation, not appropriated to the moral and religious education of their helpless children, or to defend their beloved native earth from foreign enemies, but to increase the bank-stock of a noble marquis, or to be squandered in foreign lands on foreign domestics, who, according as they act as the slave or the nurse, lick the

* Mr Hearn estimates the third of the expenditure of the labouring man as going indirectly into the funds of landowners and West India sugar planters, this proportion would give about £9, and by taking it at £6 10s. in the text, will be within the limit.

On carrying out these calculations, one is completely astounded at the results. A family possessed of £100,000 a year, has realized, or accumulated, since the corn-laws were passed in 1815, down to 1842, upwards of half a million of pounds sterling.

hand or clean the body of their noble, their profligate, and dying masters.*

One of the most dangerous parts, for the people, of our fiscal system is that which fixes the personal aristocratic items of taxation.

Pitt was a man formed either to ruin or save a nation. How firmly he has rivetted the fiscal chain on the people, by concealing the links under a covering of ornaments, to be paid for by the powerful and wealthy of the land. Away with the mockery of the understandings of the people by taxing armorial bearings and hair-powder ! These two items in the tax-paper of the man with £100,000 are covered by the bread-tax charged on the poor father of one of his grooms ! This dishonest principle of taxation was borrowed from the old French aristocratic system of taxing their nation. At a time when the people were ground down by exactions of all kinds, there was actually a tax charged on titles of nobility—previous to the Revolution in France.†

The people of this country will require to consider these things ; and, if the aristocracy are to be the subjects of taxation, to demand that they be taxed on their lands, houses, and funded property, and not on heraldic mummeries blazoned on their carriages, or on the decorated polls of waiting-men. With respect to the duty on servants, the feeling of common charity would dictate a very heavy tax indeed on foreigners employed as domestics in this country.

* See those remarkable documents, the affidavits in the Court of Chancery, of John Wilson Croker, the executor, of Flora Petit James, the mistress, and Nicholas Suisse, the valet, of the late Marquess of Hertford, published in the London newspapers, December, 1842.

† “ Thus the most high and puissant Lord, Marquis, Count, or Baron, was rated according to his birth or rank, while a citizen only paid in the ratio of his obscurity.”—*Barruel's Memoirs of Jacobinism*.

There will, no doubt, be found many thousand foreign servants employed in the houses of the wealthy classes, to the loss of bread of an equal number of honest, well-behaved country lads and lasses.*

In bringing to a close this section of my work, I cannot but advert to a species of delusion which exists on the subject of exclusive bodies—or associations of individuals who concentrate in themselves the wealth that properly belongs

* *Aristocratic taxation, and Aristocratic distinctions* —The revenue derived from the tax on *hair-powder* was, during the year ending the 5th January, 1842, £5,421 This will give 4,612 old ladies, old gentlemen, and strapping footmen each contributing to the support of the British empire twenty-three shillings and six-pence a year. Now, the evil of this tax consists in the deception which it practises on the senses of the people A duty on French cooks, and German and Italian serving-men, of double the amount of that charged on our own countrymen, would give at least five times the sum derived from hair-powder, and thus do an act of justice, at the same time increasing the revenue

Aristocratic marks of distinction and fashion have some of them very base origins. Hair-powder, for example, was first used by strolling-players, or exhibitors of wild beasts, or other wonders, at the fairs in Paris, during the reign of Louis XIV. or his successor, in order to attract attention by the savage and grotesque ornament to the human head. This is stating in substance the origin of a fashion seen in the halls of the Sovereign of Great Britain and Ireland.

The hoops which were worn during the early and middle parts of last century, were first invented, it is reported, to conceal the interesting state of a court lady before marriage.

At a royal ball, in a rude age, a lady dropped an article of her lower inner garments, which was picked up by the monarch, who with a lewd jest, instituted the *Order of the Garter*. This note is added as these pages are passing through the press, and the opportunity is afforded of recording, that in the House of Commons, on the 27th of March, 1843, during a discussion on the great expense of sending the insignia of the Garter to the King of Saxony, one honourable member irreverently called the ornament a “bauble,” but Sir Robert Peel pronounced it to be “*a most valuable appendage to an ancient monarchy like ours.*”

to many thousands, and which is magnified through a focus of splendid parade. The eye is the most important sense of the body, and is gratified with a display of fine carriages, and their equipages, and the other accompaniments of wealth lavished on one spot, or expended in an hour. The vulgar gape at the spectacle in wonder, and the enthusiastically-enlightened consider it as the shadow of regal power, or as part of the wealth and greatness of an empire. When enthusiasm lends its charm to political economy, it sees in those things "noble and graceful spectacles—minarets and blazing pinnacles"*

An idea pretty generally prevails, when considering these matters, that large incomes and salaries derived from sinecure offices by public men, if spent within the year, return to the public augmented with a sort of profit from the very act of being spent. A family that is in possession of one hundred thousand pounds a year, and that spends it within the year, is considered in the light of a benefactor to the community: and the circumstance of the income being liberally spent, reconciles men to this unequal distribution of property. But this is a question simply of spending or hoarding, and between the two, there is a difference analogous to the distinction between generosity and illiberality. A large income spent by one individual, and in one place, fills the eye, and the advantages derived from it, by the various classes of dependents on the family, and by tradesmen in the neighbourhood, are apparent at a glance; and people think that large revenues passing through a few hands do a great deal of good to a great many persons. There is no denying this; but much greater good, and more permanent good to many more persons, would be derived

* Dr. Chalmers' Political Economy, p. 360.

from the spending of an equal amount of income divided among more families.* When these subjects are discussed, or alluded to, by speakers at political assemblies, an appeal is sometimes made to the great establishments of servants, kept up by noble families, as affording employment to various classes of labourers in-doors and out-doors. This is a sort of argument that suits the occasion, and, perhaps, many of the auditors are interested in the subject. A dashing expense reconciles men to the spender, and, as long as it continues, people do not scrupulously analyze it. Fifty persons employed, in-doors and out, by a hereditary legislator spending £100,000 a year, form a considerable body, and, at the family mansion in the country, when visitors are there, give an air of princely appearance to the whole establishment.

But many of these servants scarcely ever come under the eye of their master, and they live in a free and easy manner, not the best adapted to form correct and regular habits. When the family resides in London, many of the servants live on board-wages, and dissipate a great part of their time at pot-houses, in whatever idle company there presents itself. But the employment given to a great many servants, is a circumstance which is placed in the most favourable light; and, even in the national legislative assembly, a minister of state would dwell with complacency on the fact of two or three scores of domestic labourers being employed by one family, and would argue there-

* A large income spent dashingly by an extravagant family of rank, may be compared to a mountain-torrent rushing, tumbling, roaring, foaming, splashing, and wasting itself in its course. The same amount expended quietly by a hundred families, is like the stream from the hills led into channels to irrigate the fields and the gardens—where crops wave their golden produce, and fruits and flowers refresh the senses by their fragrance and beauty.

from in favour of an aristocratic body, as the crowning pinnacle on the heads of the labouring millions at eleven shillings a week.*

But, as respects the substantial comfort and happiness of the classes within reach of the expenditure, when issued by a hundred families instead of one, the following statement will illustrate the case. A hundred families at £1,000 a year each, will not afford the spectacle of one carriage with four horses—two postilions—an outrider—two footmen and two ladies'-maids on the outside—ready to obey the commands of an elegant family within: but they will present a hundred quiet homes, containing several hundred individuals in comfortable circumstances. In

* I find that the supposed case in the text is nearly one of reality for Lord Stanley, the present Secretary for the Colonies, is reported to have spoken to his constituents in 1841—"That it was necessary to keep up prices and rents, for the sake of the farmers, the landlords, but, above all, the humbler classes, who would be the first, and greatest sufferers, if the gentlemen of England were compelled to reduce their establishments, to curtail their pleasure-grounds, to limit the number of their gardeners, or to turn off one or two grooms which the corn laws enabled them to keep." . "It is for the labouring classes of this country to consider, whether that which diminishes the income of the landlord, and the profit of the farmer, is likely to be productive of advantage to society or to them"—*From Mr Ward's Speech in the House of Commons, 14th March, 1843*

It is evident from this strain of argument, that my Lord Stanley is either very deficient of the knowledge of common arithmetical analysis, or that he entertained a contempt for the understanding of the people whom he addressed, and as the speech of a Secretary of State at a public meeting is recorded as historical evidence, the insult to his audience was extended to the country at large. It is the business and duty of a man to make the most of the case he takes up; and in reference to this subject, I may refer to the *Globe* newspaper, of the 7th September, 1842, for the information that Earl Derby, the father of Lord Stanley, discharged from his joint establishment twenty-five servants, to enable him to meet the income tax. This fact can easily be verified, and it will help to illustrate the speech of Lord Stanley, quoted above.

place of fifty servants crowded in one spot, they will have three hundred domestics, (three to a family, on an average), under the direct inspection of their masters and mistresses, and deriving benefit from the example of regular domestic society. And in fine weather, perhaps, a hundred snug one-horse chaises will go out on an afternoon's drive, affording health and enjoyment to family groups of children, delighted with everything they see.

This argument in favour of large incomes giving employment to many servants and tradespeople, is therefore completely done away with, for we find, that for fifty menials in the establishment of one very wealthy family, we have three hundred servants, domiciled in a hundred families, enjoying the blessings of a sufficiency. By subdividing the £100,000 into 200 parts at £500 each, we shall have 200 families, with two servants each—thus giving employment to eight times the number employed by one family. In carrying on this sort of calculation, we shall find, in every branch, the same gain or advantage to the community by a subdivision of property.

One of the most dangerous tendencies of the modern school of economists, is, that of throwing large masses into few hands—depopulating whole districts of a country, in order to throw many farms into one—granting in colonies immense tracts of waste-lands to companies or individuals, and, by economic laws, bringing together into the possession of a few hundred persons, the wealth that ought to be spread among millions. The utmost liberty ought to be given to individuals, to accumulate whatever amount of property they are enabled to do, within their lifetime. But society has claims which are superior to the wishes and intentions of the dead.

It is a law of society which all history illustrates and confirms, that decay, ruin, or revolution, follows the accumulation of the property of a country into few hands. Were we possessed of the statistics of the ancient Asiatic empires, we should find this to be the case. We know it to have been the case in the Roman republic, swallowed up by the imperial despotism—and in modern France and Spain we have beheld the like operation.

The facts and statistical calculations adduced in this chapter, establish the existence of a state of society which cannot endure. It is not necessary to give expression to the feelings which the consideration of such a state of affairs awakens. In a civilized and christian nation, it is very awful. But it is asserted, deliberately and advisedly, to the credit of human nature, that ninety persons out of one hundred, cannot be aware of the effect and tendency of our present fiscal system, on the happiness, comfort, and on the very existence, of so many millions of human beings, within the islands of Great Britain and Ireland.

Nine-tenths of the persons who mix in society, and take a share in its business, surely are not aware that, were a law to be enacted, to deprive thousands of the most wealthy and powerful families of one-third or one-half of their whole property, for the good of the community, the act would not be one of confiscation—not one of spoliation—but one of simple RESTITUTION.

* It may be proper to state the possible issue of events in this country, under an obstinate perseverance in the present cruel, unjust, and impolitic financial system. The enormous wealth accumulated in few hands, already offers a tempting bait to the bold and ambitious, but reckless, portion of the population; these, of course, are a small minority of the mass of the people, but they will abide their time, and during one of those periodical

Tiberius Cæsar, merciful in his very cruelty, seldom changed the governors whom he placed over provinces because, after they had become satiated with spoil, they naturally fell into indolence and ceased from pillage. A new governor, poor, and eager for wealth, would have been a fresh evil, and a more intolerable curse than the old one, gorged with fiscal spoils.

The bulk of mankind reconcile themselves to present evils, to avoid flying to others that they know not of. But let governments measure their danger when masses of their subjects coolly and deliberately contemplate a change by extra-constitutional means, and, being convinced of the justice of their cause, calmly wait the junction of circumstances to free themselves, by a vigorous effort, from the oppression of partial legislation and selfish power. The dominant aristocratic party in this country have lost the prestige derived from traditionary influence by the very sordidness of their motives and proceedings. They have, indiscreetly for themselves, but most happily for the people, thrown off the mask. Two shillings and fourpence of duty on a quarter of wheat, constitute the difference or measure of their political struggles !

paroxysms of distress, caused by foreign war, failure of harvest, deranged trade, and consequent disorder of finance at the Treasury and the Bank—insinuate themselves into the confidence of the masses in the large cities, and the more scattered agricultural labourers—agitate their passions, and excite their hopes, and lead them on to become instruments in their hands. In this case, one monster aristocracy will devour another of a tamer nature.

CHAP. VIII.

ARISTOCRATIC INSOLVENCY, AND THE MIDDLE CLASSES.

CONTRAST BETWEEN THE VERY WEALTHY PORTION OF THE ARISTOCRACY AND THE POOR LABOURING CLASSES—THE MIDDLE CLASS STANDS BETWEEN THE LIVING AND THE DEAD IN THE NATION—BUT IT HAS ITS OWN ACCOUNTS TO SETTLE WITH THE EMBARRASSED OR INSOLVENT PART OF THE ARISTOCRATIC ORDER—THE BALANCE STRUCK BETWEEN THEM—THE MONSTROSITY OF OUR SYSTEM EXEMPLIFIED AND ILLUSTRATED BY THE CASE OF LORD HUNTINGTOWER.

THE preceding chapter contains a detailed account of the effect of the scheme of taxation, direct and indirect, established in this country, on the circumstances and condition of the labouring classes of society—a description of people, helpless, and at the mercy of fiscal and political power. It was shown, that a great part of the enormous incomes of certain classes in this country, are derived fiscally from the hard labour of thousands of men.

The aristocratic legislating order in this country, is divided into two sections—namely, the very wealthy portion, consisting of families too indolent, too careless, too stupid, or too proud, to take an active part in the business of the nation, and, by doing so, to come in competition, and brook the personal collision, with the needy, ambitious, and restless members of the other half of the aristocratic class. Now, this very opulent and very passive part of the order,

are indifferent to corn-law questions, and other measures which the mass of the people so bitterly complain of. Suppose that, at the end of the year, twenty per cent less of rents should be received from their property, the consequence would be, that they would be spared the trouble and anxiety of looking out for investments for that amount, and, in fact, would be happier, by so much less demand on their time and attention. But this extremely opulent and easy-going section of the aristocratic order, must bear in mind, that they partake of the odium thrown on their embarrassed and reckless brethren, and will most assuredly incur the responsibility that falls on the latter. It is therefore for their own interest and safety, that they do make themselves masters of fiscal and statistical subjects, and interfere to get abuses removed, and a course of injustice stopped. But that is their business—to which they will probably, very shortly, require to devote more attention than they have as yet been accustomed to give to any subject, out of the range of their domestic affairs, and their amusements and pleasures.

As contrasts,—this very affluent and very heavy class of citizens have been brought into comparison with the labouring and very poor portion of the people. It has been considered necessary to do so, in order to rouse their attention to certain circumstances of their own affairs, of which they are unquestionably not aware. We will willingly acquit these noble and most affluent individuals, of participation, by voluntary deed, in a system such as described in the preceding and other sections of this work ; and we will disbelieve that they are cognizant of the fact, that a great portion of their wealth is derived from the labour of thousands of men, toiling and sweating under a weary load of partial law ; and that these men, so ground to the earth—

so begrimed in poverty—so worn with care—so neglected and despised—contribute, relatively to their circumstances, more to the support of that imperial throne on which the Queen of nations sits, (and to extend the power of this empire wherever commerce, colonization, or perhaps ambition, may call for the extension) than the wealthiest or the proudest of nobles; and moreover, that these men are as ready when the demand is made on their services, to expose their lives in enterprises, which may be to increase the wealth, redound to the honour, and cement the power of the class who make laws that, indirectly, diminish the subsistence of the families, at home, of the very men who fight the battles abroad.

Truly, man is a most unaccountable being, and a compound of the most opposite qualities.

In pursuing these subjects into their depths and tortuosities, the mind is alternately roused by the enormity of the injustice, or excited by the folly and simplicity displayed; and the pen wavers on the line, between the denouncement of the enormity and the expression of the sense of the ridiculous, as seen in the spectacle of an order of nobles, maintained chiefly by a morsel from the penny loaf of this agricultural labourer, and a bite from the lean bacon of another,—from contributions infinitesimally collected from the artisans, crowded amidst the smoke and filth of our large cities, which add to wealth imperceptibly but surely, like the sweatings of sovereigns to the hoard of the Jew:—every anvil delivers its quota, through the food which strengthens the arm that wields the hammer; and a dribble from every pot of porter that washes the throat and cheers the stout heart of the bargeman, sends its representative to the table of the duke. What heaps of wealth are squeezed out of those countless swarms in cotton-mills;

but, oh ! what agony is endured in the process ! even the little printer-boy, who brings the sheets from the press to the author, has paid his tax to the Aristocracy, through the breakfast his mother prepared for him in the morning.

A few words will now be addressed to an order of the people, who are in outward circumstances very different from the great bulk of the population.

This order is expressively called the middle class of society, and stays the plague by standing between the living and the dead in the nation. This class is from its position, independently of its competence and its intelligence, possessed of great influence as a body, and is, in fact, all-powerful on every question to which it applies its energies. It being thus the umpire, as it were, in the decision of all weighty matters touching the safety and prosperity of the empire, it has the power of protecting its own interests, by the mere force or exercise of its opinions. Now, this sketch of the nature of the influence of the individuals composing the middle class of society, leads to the explanation of the share that they have in the maintenance of the aristocratic order; and to do this, we shall couple them with the needy and reckless portion of it.

It has been demonstrated, that a family, in easy circumstances, spending at the rate of about £250 a year, in provisions of all kinds, is charged in the prices of the articles from 20 to 25 per cent, as an advance that accrues to the landowners, in consequence of laws which tax food, or restrict its importation into this country. This will make a contribution of from £50 to £60 a year. This is getting off very easily, compared with the William Gladstones of society, who pay about fifty per cent. of direct and indirect taxation on their gross incomes. Be it observed, that £250

a year spent in provisions, will measure a gross income of about £1,000—so that the £50 to £60 of tax to the landed interest, amount to 5 to 6 per cent on that sum. As the income diminishes, the ratio of the taxation increases.

It has been shown that a man with £500 a year, spends in provisions £166; a man with £250, spends £105; so that the first contributes $6\frac{1}{2}$ to 8 per cent, and the second contributes $8\frac{1}{2}$ to $10\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, to enable my Lord Dashly to speculate in horses, run his carriages, sport with his ladies, hire his French cooks or Swiss valets, and to pay the interest on money borrowed of usurers, assurance companies, and other wealthy parties, or to indulge the rural tastes of Lord Landly, gracefully exhibited in the extension of his "pleasure grounds," in the addition to his gardeners, or in the increase of his grooms.

Now, there is a very steady-going, respectable portion of the middle classes, for whom a great degree of sympathy is always excited, and for whose special benefit it is professed, in and out of the legislature, that these most interesting and romantic corn-laws were first enacted, and are still maintained. Now, Dear Farmers, we have become quite affectionate towards you, and sincerely wish you health, prosperity, and happiness. As a proof, that you are well taken care of, you pay your income tax charged according to the amount of the rent that you give for your farms; and all of you, whose rents are under £300 a year, are exempted from that most obnoxious impost. By returning on your rents, you are saved the annoyance* of exposing your private affairs. We are no farmers, and must confess our ignorance of agricultural matters, but we know that you are *consumers* like the rest of your countrymen, and it is to your character as consumers that we are applying these remarks. In all those discussions on provision-

laws, rents of land, and so forth, your position as citizens, living at rates from £250 to £500 and £1,000 a year, has been, as far as we have noticed, almost entirely overlooked. We presume that a farmer occupying a farm at the rent of £300 a year may be considered as worth, or living at, that rate, and consequently, according to the foregoing computation, he contributes to the *landlord* interest, not the *landed* interest, £25 to £30 a year, in the increased prices of the provisions for his own family. In another part of this work it has been demonstrated that, in consequence of these corn-laws, he pays 8s. 8d. an acre more than he would do, were these laws abolished; and on a farm of 200 acres, this will amount to £86 a year. The farmer knows best whether he gets, one year with another, an advance in the price of his corn, to replace the extra rent to his landlord—but, at all events, he recovers nothing to make good the tax on his own consumption, and on the consumption of corn and forage for his horses and cattle! Oh, these corn-laws! the most spiteful delusion that ever was practised on man and beast!

Lord Stanley, who, as a secretary to the government, ought to know what he is about, said at a public meeting, “that it was necessary to keep up prices and rents, for the sake of the farmers, the landlords, but above all, the humbler classes, who would be the first, and the greatest sufferers, if the gentlemen of England,”—and so on.*

* The attention of the author of this work was first decidedly engaged in the consideration of our fiscal arrangements, during the study of our colonial system in the Australian colonies. He early detected the operation of the needy or insolvent part of the aristocratic order, in the schemes of colonization, and, in a letter that he addressed to Sir Robert Peel on these subjects, under date of May 1, 1841, he thus expressed himself, “There are two classes of persons in this country, who favour the idea, that our distresses arise from a positive excess of numbers. The first is,

Another lord, of a frank and communicative disposition, explains the whole secret in the following words, in the audience of landlords, farmers, and labourers at some public meeting in Ireland.

“Some persons would say, ‘Oh, let the landlord reduce

the party, *including the over-mortgaged landed interest*, who derive an advantage from the unequal and unjust system of laws which press upon subsistence, and the second class consists of proprietors of lands in the colonies, and the thousands of colonial jobbers, ever active in persuading the people, the parliament, and the government, that emigration is the great and sole cure for the distress which pervades the country.”—*Thoughts on Population and Starvation*.

On the 30th August, 1843, the Author forwarded to Sir Robert Peel a formal protest against the income tax, on being called to make returns for the same it was a long document, containing fifteen or sixteen heads, or articles, with detailed reasons against the tax, so long as the bonus was continued to the landowners under the shape of coin-laws.

“Article 2. I protest against the income tax as having been established by a House of Commons, whose corruption, and consequent want of moral influence, has been fully proved by its own proceedings and debates, and by its committees appointed to investigate numerous cases of bribery by its members. This House of Commons sat under the imputation made by one of its members, that he was ready to prove that the majority of seats in it were gained and held by bribery and corruption”

“Article 6—Now I do maintain it to be a monstrous thing that I should be taxed to uphold laws to save spendthrifts, improvident persons, or insolvents, from the natural consequences of their own conduct, and with regard to inferior soils, the owners have got them as nature gave them, and let them make the most of these lands. But I protest against being taxed to raise poor soils to a level with rich ones” After impeaching Sir Robert Peel and his party, of constructive disloyalty to their sovereign for having introduced to Her Majesty a House of Commons that, they must have known, was assembled in circumstances of extreme intrigue and bribery, I conclude the 9th article,—“No set of party men would have dared to have played for political power, and have perilled the public safety for such a sordid object, under the masculine and energetic sway of the grandfather, or of either of the uncles, of our present sovereign. The men composing the present government have taken on their own heads a fearful responsibility.”

his rent, all will be well.' But it is much easier for them to say it, than for the landlord to do it. Many of them certainly receive several thousands a year; but the question is, does this income belong to those who receive it? Was it not notorious, that almost all the landlords had their lands mortgaged, (and he himself knew many in the neighbourhood who were so circumstanced;) and if they did not pay the interest of that, and sometimes the principal too, they would be pressed to do so by the strong arm of the law, or else have their estates brought to the hammer? The landlords were consequently not able to reduce their rents, or to act with that kind and friendly feeling which they wished towards their tenants. That being the case, it was idle for the manufacturers of England to talk about their reducing their rents to that extent. Some landlords were so deeply in debt, that they could scarcely exist. . . . When prices were high, every man was comfortable, the landlord, the farmer, and the labourer; but these times had passed away, and what could the landlords do now?"*

In a note at foot, are a few notices of reduction of rents †

* Extract from Lord Mountcashel's speech, at a meeting of landlords, farmers, and labourers in Ireland — See *Times* leading article 24th Jan. 1843.

† *Reduction of Rent made voluntarily*

Lord L—— has relinquished £5,000, equal to about 20 per cent, on the rental — *Observer*, 29th Jan. 1843.

The Hon. R. L. S—— has offered an abatement of 25 per cent.— *Standard*, 1st March, 1843.

The Marquis of O—— has made an abatement of 20 per cent.— *Globe*, 4th March, 1843.

The Commissioners of the Borough of Coleman have reduced rent 10 per cent.— *Globe*, 16th March, 1843

Lord D—— has made an abatement of 20 per cent.— *Globe*, 3d April 1843

These are all the cases that are at present before me, but every person will be able to supply a great many.

of 20 to 25 per cent. made voluntarily by landlords, which confirm the general correctness of taking that rate of 20 per cent, as the addition made artificially to the rent of land in this country.

In summing up on the foregoing data, we shall have the following scale of amounts, abstracted in twenty-five years, by means of this system of laws "TO KEEP UP PRICES AND RENTS."

A farmer living at the rate of £300 a year, would have been now richer by about £680.

A tradesman, a professional man, an annuitant, or any other person living at the rate of £500 year, would have saved about £1,000.

The man living at the rate of £1,000 a year, calculating his annual quota at £55, would have had a balance at his bankers, or the money in the shape of an investment, for his daughter's dowry or marriage-presents, of £1225. Oh ! these laws "to keep up prices and rents," have caused many a female heart to ache !

The middle class of people in this country, are not to be pitied like that numerous body of labourers, already so often referred to.

Men with property, or industry, yielding incomes of £250 to £1,000 a year, have themselves to blame for their ignorance or apathy, in allowing a system to exist which abstracts so much out of their gains, to support the insolvent branch of the aristocratic order. An indirect tax of £25 to £60 a year for this object will not sink the payers all at once into difficulties, but it must cause them much mortification to think that the amount is about equal to the rent of a cottage, or house, in a picturesque village, or a quiet provincial town.

It has been said, by some celebrated person, that the

class of men possessed of £500 a year, are naturally conservatives in their principles—No doubt they are, for they stand in that middle position of society, which requires great judgment in the management and distribution of their property. They are eminently conservative, being most anxious to PRESERVE what they have got.

Considering the effects of our ill-balanced system of fiscal law on the particular classes of society, it will appear that this middle, or easy class of the people, is most injured by the burden to support the reckless and insolvent portion of the aristocratic order. We are approaching what some persons would call the delicate part of the subject; but we can perceive nothing indelicate in discussing the affairs of public men, when circumstances bring these public men and their affairs before committees of the House of Commons, to investigate bribery and intrigues at elections, or before courts of law or bankruptcy. But in this reference to public men and their affairs, in illustration of the great cause of the people, we disclaim all desire or intention of giving personal offence, and in this sense, we have no hesitation in beginning with an apology for making such free use of their names.

The case of Lord Huntingtower, from the extraordinary circumstances connected with it, may be thought an extreme case, but, by applying a little knowledge of human nature to it, the result will be found to present features but too common in the higher ranks of life, supposed to be above the reach of public opinion.

According to the evidence produced before the Court of Bankruptcy and Court of Review, the outline of the case of William Lionel Felix Tollemache, otherwise William Lord Huntingtower, is as follows:—This young gentleman was educated at Eton school, which he left at

17 years of age, and was at once thrown upon the world, left to his own resources, and exposed to the temptations offered to a lad of that age, known to be the heir-at-law to an earl's title, and an estate of £40,000 a year. Nothing was allowed him by his father; and he said in his examination, that all the money he received from his family, from leaving school to coming of age, was the sum of £300 or £400 from his grandmother. He plunged headlong, and with violence, into the vortex of extravagance and dissipation; and on coming of age, within four years of leaving the halls of Eton, he had incurred debts to the amount of two hundred and twenty thousand pounds; that is to say, claims to that large sum were brought against him, and at the suit of some of his creditors, he was made an inmate of the Queen's Bench prison on attaining his majority. He appeared to have been the dupe and the victim of a set of harpies who surrounded him. He declared that all he had ever received for one debt that was brought against him of £20,000 was the sum of about two hundred pounds. On being brought before the Court of Bankruptcy, he could show no assets, and could give no account of his property or of his affairs; and the statement, made up under the direction of his solicitors, he confessed his inability to understand. The only tangible article of property out of the wreck, of which any positive account could be got, appeared to have been a dressing-case, of the value of £1,000, which was pawned, and the money advanced on it divided with the individual who claimed of him a debt of £20,000.*

* The fiat of bankruptcy was issued against him as a horse-dealer, and evidence appeared in court, that he had dealt, bought, and sold horses with many persons, and practised the arts familiar in that trade, such as using ginger for the tails of the horses, and other tricks.

The attention of the merchants and bankers of London, and other commercial and manufacturing towns, is especially called to the fact, that this credulous, simple, and spendthrift boy, did not appear to know the difference between the debtor and creditor side of an account-current, and this while claims were made on him to the amount of £220,000.* Mark this! for we are now going to relate the circumstance which gives us a right to allude, in this particular manner, to the affairs of my Lord Huntingtower. It stands recorded in the parliamentary annals of this country for the year 1841, that this extravagant and ill-informed youth, offered himself a candidate for a seat in the imperial legislature; and after having expended in the election the sum of three thousand five hundred pounds, he was actually elected, by the voters of the borough of Andover, as its representative in the House of Commons.† Here is one historical fact; and another is, that this farce of an election took place just forty-eight hours before my Lord Huntingtower attained the golden age of twenty-one years; and, in consequence of this prematurity of legislative capacity in this young gentleman, my Lord William Paget was returned as member for Andover, in place of my Lord William Huntingtower. This young bankrupt said in substance, in his examination, that as he had spent the money, and Lord William Paget had gained the honour of the election, the latter was bound in honour

* All that he appeared to know or remember of having accepted bills to the amount of £10,000 in favour of a Colonel Copeland, was the fact of about five pounds' worth of stamps having been consumed in the transaction!

† He would or could give no account of the items of this large expenditure of £3,500, but from the evidence produced before other election committees, of barefaced bribery with bank-notes, the worthy citizens of Great Britain, who are taxed to uphold such a system, may, without much effort, imagine how the money was spent.

to repay the amount thus expended. The creditors of Lord William Huntingtower, will thus have a claim on Lord William Paget, for the aforesaid amount of three thousand five hundred pounds, expended in the independent borough of Andover, in the county of Hampshire, England.

Now, we will not believe that, ill-informed, reckless, and ill-advised, as Mr. Tollemache was, he had any desire or design of securing his person from arrest for debt, by trying to get within the protecting privileges of the House of Commons. We are not sure if this exemption from arrest for debt still exists as one of the privileges of parliament, but, if it does yet exist, not a moment ought to be lost in removing this disgrace from the legislature.

We believe that the following is one of the rules established in all the London West-End Clubs: "If any member shall have the misfortune to become bankrupt, or take the benefit of any Act of Parliament for relief of Insolvent Debtors, or make any assignment for the benefit of, or compound with, his creditors, he shall, *ipso facto*, cease to be a member of the club, and shall forfeit all right to or claim upon the club or its property, and shall not be again admissible as a member until the expiration of twelve calendar months from the happening of any of the before-mentioned events: after which time he shall be re-admissible, by ballot, without payment of the entrance-fee." As there is scarcely one member of either House of Parliament who does not belong to a club, with a clause or law to the above effect, protective of the property and credit of the club, there appears to be the very essence of satire pointed to the legislative body, by allowing a member of Parliament to retain his seat, while he may be disqualified from appearing in another place, where the most serious business transacted is to read the newspapers, retail or listen to the

gossip of the day, eat a cheap dinner, and infringe the regulations by sleeping on an elegant sofa with dirty boots on.

These observations are addressed to merchants, manufacturers, and bankers, and let them ponder and well consider the consequences of a parliamentary representation so ill-contrived, so loose, and so corrupt, as the system which admits such abuses as the one described. And the reports of Committees of the House of Commons, on the corruption, on the bribery, and the illegal practices brought to light in the election of 1841, have established the existence of a state of things, which ought not to be allowed to continue a year longer. All parties in the House have agreed on the enormity of the corruption, and have confessed guilty to the charge, and all express themselves anxious to remove the disgrace from the country. The way to prove the sincerity of the desire, would be to enact a most restrictive law against bribery at elections of members for Parliament—even to make it felony to offer or accept a bribe for a vote on such occasions. After such a law should be passed, let the present Parliament be dissolved, and an appeal made to the integrity and good sense of the electors for another.

This is no party question.

Our merchants and bankers must weigh the consequences—and consider the injury that their credit, and the credit of the nation, will sustain, on the exchanges of Paris, Amsterdam, and the other great marts of Europe—in the bazaars of Calcutta, or in the factories of Canton—in New York, or New Orleans—or round the globe itself—if it become known to the nations, that a bankrupt boy, without judgment, and not so competent or well-informed as any junior clerk in a broker's office or a chandler's shop, may

be admitted into the halls of the legislature, and have a vote on a question of peace or war—on questions of foreign tariffs—of duties on cotton and other articles for our commerce—on the opium question—on the *spice* trade—perhaps on the currency question—on the renewal of the Bank charter—on the bankrupt-laws—on treaties of extradition—on poor-laws—and, in fine, on the thousand-and-one questions which the complicated affairs of a great nation every day present.

Imagine the consequences of a lad of twenty-one years of age, beginning to legislate for Great Britain and Ireland, for Hindostan, for Canada, for the West India Colonies, for the Australian Colonies, with a debt of two hundred and thousand pounds already charged by his folly on his estates; and extend still farther the idea of this individual, as he grows to manhood, and learns practically the four rules of arithmetic, by the quarterly payment of the interest on that enormous debt—giving his vote to prohibit, perhaps, the introduction of corn into the country, or to regulate the duties thereon, in order, as my Lord Stanley describes it, "*to keep up prices and rents.*" The idea is altogether monstrous, and an appeal is here earnestly made to our manufacturers, to our merchants, to our shipowners, to our bankers—to step forward to save the country from such persons, and to remind them, that if the great interests of the nation are to fall into decay, to let us not sink down under the ridicule of mankind, amused at our folly, and rejoiced at our ruin.

CHAP. IX.

THE LEGISLATIVE AND POLITICAL EYE.

THE NATURAL EYE IS PLACED IN FRONT—MOTION IS THE ORDER OF NATURE—MAN INDIVIDUALLY AND SOCIALLY IS ALWAYS IN MOTION—THE IDEA OF FINALITY IS ABSURD—ALL GREAT LAWGIVERS HAVE HAD EXTRAORDINARY POWER OF FORESIGHT—THE MODERN POLITICAL EYE IS TURNED BACKWARDS—INSTANCES OF THE REMARKABLE WANT OF FORESIGHT IN SOME CELEBRATED MEN IN BRITISH HISTORY—LIVING PUBLIC MEN—THE MENTAL POWER AND POLITICAL CHARACTER OF PEELE.

NATURE has placed the eye in the front of the head, to enable men to look forward and advance. All space is, relatively to the eye and the position, in front of the beholder. Man stands erect, and looks forward, or upwards to the heavens: he walks and progresses, and it is by an effort or with a contortion that he turns his head to look behind him.

Futurity is to the mind what space is to the physical eye. It lies in *front*, and the full half of the thoughts that pass through the mind have their direction that way. The past is drawn on, and the present used, in connection with the future, and by this process the mind is kept ever in a state of movement.

In the old quaint language of metaphysics, nature was described as abhorring a vacuum, which, in other words, means a state of rest, for where nothing exists, nothing can move. Indeed, motion is the very order of nature, for

every thing in the heavens above, on the earth below, and in the waters under the earth, is in a state of movement; and, were the Almighty to stretch out his arm, and arrest the motion of the universe, chaos and the darkness of confusion would in an instant succeed to the order, the harmony, and the splendour which now are displayed in all his works.

On this globe every thing that exists is in a state of motion, and hence the beauty and endless variety of the objects of nature. The sun and moon, by days, months, and years, keep time in perpetual motion. The atmosphere is ever agitated by the breeze or the gale; the calm is the vacuum that for a brief space interrupts the progress of the elements; and the clouds, the winged messengers of the skies, rest on the mountain-tops impatient at the delay. The tides, the currents, and the swell of the ocean are for ever changing and vibrating from pole to pole. The current of rivers carry down every thing that floats on their surface. All the processes in the vegetable kingdom are through or by motion, and the largest trees in the forest have gradually moved up from beneath the surface of the earth to their towering dimensions.

But it is in man, individually and collectively, that we find the force of motion. This is illustrated in the whole of his being, from that instant when his eye first opens to the light of day, till his body gives up the motion of life for that of decay and corruption.

Man in society is not, and cannot be, an exception to the universal law of nature, but he is ever in movement, and his condition requires everything about him to keep pace with his advance. Men, who would be political philosophers in legislation, pass a law which they entitle an act of FINALITY for a great nation, as if they could, by a dictum, stay the

progress of an enlightened people to improvement. It is this arrogance of the legislator, and this presumption of the individual, in affairs of government, that have caused so many difficulties in society, and checked its forward march.

All great and original lawgivers have possessed, in an eminent degree, the mental faculty of grasping futurity. Indeed, this intellectual power is essential to the formation of the character of the legislator and statesman, and, in proportion to the strength of its development have been the wisdom, the benevolence, and the durability of the laws and institutions established for a people. It does not perhaps come within the scope of these observations to refer to Moses, the greatest and most original of all founders of nations, and the most benevolent of law-makers, as Christians look to a higher source than mere human intellect for the institutes of that personage.

Almost every nation has produced its great founder and original legislator who, in settling the form of government and enacting laws for the existing generation, looked far into futurity, and intuitively perceived the various and complicated interests that would arise in the course of ages. The mental powers of such persons are of the highest order, as they have to penetrate, and judge, the characters of the men living, and, from them, of their descendants for many generations. This power of foresight is a very peculiar gift, and is, as it were, a ray direct from the Divine intelligence.

Among the Romans, Numa and Servius Tullius laid down the principles of law, and sketched the outlines of a government which were to lead their countrymen to the height of power as a nation.

In France, Charlemagne raised his country to greatness, and civilized it by his laws.

In England, the Great Alfred formed institutions which, at the end of a thousand years, still stand on the soil, and his laws survive in those customs and traditions which constitute what is called the common law of the land.

America has produced its Washington, whose maxims and laws, if preserved in their purity, will support his country in independence and power for many ages.

Those great characters rise up and appear conspicuously at the first establishment of a people as a nation, or during the convulsions of revolution.

After a country has become settled under regular government, and its power competed for by different political parties, who alternately possess themselves of the control of the subsistence of the people, public affairs are managed on principles very opposite to those that actuated the great statesmen who founded the Roman, the English, and the American constitutions.

The most of modern statesmen have their mental eye placed behind instead of in front, and they are consequently quite incapable of advancing along with the rest of mankind—or, if carried forward, their progress is involuntary, and they are repeatedly tripping and staggering under the alarm of receding from those objects on which they have been accustomed to gaze, and to consider monuments raised by the wisdom of their ancestors.

Now, the ancestors of a people may have been wise enough in their day and generation, but as a Numa, an Alfred, or a Washington only appears once in a thousand years, and, in his day, was only one out of many millions of souls, it follows, that the wisdom of ancestors was merely the wisdom of ordinary mortals, and therefore the chance is a great many millions to one, that their laws will not suit a gene-

ration that succeeds after the lapse of a hundred, or two hundred years.

The truth is, that, in a country wisely governed on the principles of common sense, there ought to be a standing committee of the legislature, to revise all the statutes, and report what amendments or changes should be made in them at the end of every few years, to meet the altered circumstances which have taken place within the period. In modern nations, with their affairs so artificially complicated, it is scarcely possible to enact a law which in all its clauses, shall exactly be adapted to the position of affairs at the end of the short period of ten or twenty years.

In bringing the foregoing observations to bear on the history of Great Britain for the last hundred years, we shall find from it many proofs of their correctness. The party that has governed the country, has its mind's eye always tending backwards—indeed, it presents the most extraordinary obliquity of vision, and seems to be almost destitute of the political and moral courage of looking straight forward into futurity.

The men whom it has engaged to conduct the public business, since the outbreak of the French Revolution, have shown a lack of forethought or foresight quite remarkable. Nature bestowed on Pitt a considerable power of penetrating the dark future, but the lightning-flash that burst from France bewildered him, and weakened and almost seared his mental vision, and the film of aristocratic influence obscured it. His first speeches and acts showed the inherent powers that he possessed, of seeing into futurity. His description of the Americans, as “men struggling in the holy cause of liberty,” anticipated the event of their Independence, and showed a sympathy for a people, em-

barked in a great enterprise.* His motion for a reform of the representation of the people, was made just fifty years before that great change was accomplished. But blindness seized him on the outbreak of the Revolution in France. It is indeed most extraordinary to find such men as Pitt and Burke, whose genius was bright and acute, in a state of perfect infatuation on the subject of that great event. They appeared to have lost entirely the faculty of discerning, or knowing beforehand, the events that were to happen to-morrow from the transactions of the day. Burke considered the French nation, after the decisive outbreak, as verging to ruin, and falling into a state of complete helplessness and imbecility. He considered her expunged from the European system, and in 1790 recommended a reduction in the peace-establishment of this country, because he believed France to be politically extinct, and distant from the restoration to her former active existence. But still more infatuated was Pitt, who, in 1792, declared in parliament, that there was every prospect of a continuation of peace, which he thought might be reckoned on for ten years.

The following year opened with the war that terminated in 1815 !

This ought to be a lesson to statesmen, and make them diffident of their own views of matters affecting the interests of nations ; and it ought to teach a people to be mistrustful of the judgment and foresight of the men who make the greatest pretensions to both.

* A man, who, at the age of two or three and twenty, commanded such attention on his first appearance in the House of Commons, as to lead him to the head of the government in a few years afterwards, with little private fortune or interest, was an extraordinary man.

But there are no greater instances of infatuated blindness in public characters of great name, and of total darkness in their mental vision, than what have occurred within these last fifteen years.

Wellington's celebrated declaration in the legislature, that the popular branch of it could not be improved, and that he would oppose any measure for that purpose, preceded, by about eighteen months, a complete reform of the system of representation of the people. And, ten years later, his announcement that he did not know any country where the poor man had a better chance of improving his condition than in England, was made at a time when the most appalling misery was overspreading the country; and shortly afterwards, on the recommendation of the bench of bishops, the Sovereign of this great empire addressed a letter, begging charity, to save the unhappy people from starvation.*

But a still more alarming instance of that infatuation which seizes the government of a nation in times of imminent danger, was the apathy displayed at the closing of the

* The Archbishop of Canterbury and the bench of Bishops, no doubt, thought that they were doing a very charitable and christian-like thing, when they recommended Her Majesty to appeal to the benevolent feelings of the wealthy, in aid of the starving artisans of Paisley, Sheffield, and other places. But as the bishops are also lay-legislators for this great manufacturing and commercial nation, it may be expected of them that they should know something of the state of the great interests of the country. They know best how much money was collected—we believe not above £80,000 to £100,000 at the outside. Now, by knowing the state of matters, had they recommended the government to grant the petition of some of our manufacturers, to be allowed to receive payment of some of their just debts due by Americans, in wheat and flour, greater good would have resulted.

The danger to the people and to the sovereign in these times, is the want of acquaintance, by Her Majesty, of the *real* state of affairs in this country.

Parliament, in the month of August, 1842. The Queen said in her speech—"There are, I trust, indications of gradual recovery from that depression which has affected many branches of manufacturing industry, and has exposed large classes of my people to privations and sufferings, which have caused me the deepest concern." Within less than one week from the utterance of these words, Manchester, and almost all the towns and villages of the manufacturing districts, were in a state of convulsion, that assimilated to the fearful scenes of a popular revolution.* Troops were marched from the capital and other places to put down the disturbances. The appearance of London at that time was striking. The foot guards marched out after dark, and artillery was forwarded from Woolwich. The noise of troops, and the gleam of their arms, were mixed with the cries and shouts of the crowds who assembled in and blocked up the streets. The spectacle altogether was impressive, and awakened many melancholy forebodings of what might happen in this country.

Men who acquire by insidious usurpation the government of a country, find themselves in a false position, when they have to oppose the just demands of vast masses of the population. There is not a more humiliating spectacle than that of a man, straining every nerve, rising early, and labouring late, to keep back a people, and check their

* As an instance of the weakness of Sir Robert Peel's mental vision, and of the shallowness of his invention, may be adduced the inference that he drew in Parliament, on 24th September, 1841, from the increased deposits in the saving-banks, during the hay-cutting months of July and August of that year, "*as a proof of the increased confidence of the country in his administration.*" As if the poor labourers, who were thus preserving their hard-won wages for the approaching winter, knew or cared who was the instrument employed to tax them, and their wives, and their children, in their food!—[See debate in the House of Commons, on 24th September, 1841.]

efforts to improve their condition. And, on the other hand, there cannot be a more inspiring and glorious situation than that of a minister or leader of a great nation advancing to wealth and power.

The government of a country, in the first position, is necessarily in the attitude of pushing back the great mass of the population naturally striving to advance.

The attitude is as undignified in appearance as it is dangerous in reality, for the government may lose its balance and be trodden under foot by the people in their forward movement.

We fail to discover in any of the men, who for the last twenty years, have been at the front of the nation, the possession of the mental powers which a great crisis requires. Men of either party, hackneyed in the tactics of the old system of government in this country, have their minds cramped by the very routine of office, and they lack the nerve of arm, and the unflinching eye, to raise a great nation above a revolution, or to conduct it through one; because, failing, either by wise and energetic measures, to reform the fiscal system, and by commercial regulations to enable the nation again to spring into energy, or by bolder measures to form such organic changes as will constitute a new era in the British history—there remains the alternative of a rapid falling-in of the strata of society, the lowest ranks become still more miserable by the crushing weight of manufacturers, merchants, tradesmen, and farmers breaking down in circumstances, and falling in ruin on the classes still lower. But there is another event which is too dreadful to be anticipated, and will not be described.

One of the phenomena of the age is, the individual who at present occupies the first office in the government of this

country. Without the possession of the great intellectual qualities which have distinguished, more or less, men who have governed nations with wisdom and foresight, he has contrived to preserve a position which has always given him influence with a party, and made him be looked to as a leader. This is called talent, and proves his superiority, say his admirers. But tact and plausibility are the principal qualities which give him this ascendancy. He is quite deficient of the higher powers of the mind, which are shown in invention. The whole of his history is challenged for one measure which has the stamp of originality. He is the greatest political plagiarist of any age or country; and after the interest which a *living* statesman must of a necessity excite, has ceased, the future historian will search in vain for any relic of the native genius of Peel; and his reputation, in a couple of generations, will be like that of some celebrated actor, who leaves no *act* behind him, and who is remembered only through the tradition of his wonderful powers of imitation, as he strutted his hour upon the stage. This poverty of invention, and disposition to plagiarism, are discovered even in minute things.*

* In one of the electioneering harangues which Sir Robert Peel made to some gaping assembly, at the time he was flushed with the triumph of a majority of *one*, in his motion of want of confidence in the late administration, he compared himself to a physician, who was to be called in and consulted by her Majesty, on the state of the health of the nation; and he objected, when asked to give his opinion, until he had pocketed his fee. This simile was perfectly characteristic of the caution and the selfishness of the man, and perhaps there is no circumstance or incidental remark made by a public man, that has afforded greater scope for comment and joke in the periodical papers, and in parliament, than this sort of happy illustration made of himself and his position, and it has formed quite a capital in trade to the caricaturists, from that most imaginative of sketchers HB down to the penny lithographer. In the windows of every print-shop in London, the

What then is the secret or the essence of his power? He has been reared a political man. He has been made an orator, and innately possesses no element of the creative or poetic genius. His father designed him for public business; his education commenced in the nursery, but it has not consisted of the acquisition of knowledge merely—and of all the accomplishments which it is in the power of money and of society to bestow, but it was that education and training of the thoughts which were to be effective in public assemblies. His habits were thus early formed, and he has grown up by these means one of the most regular men of business; and in this consists a great part of his strength. Next to these acquired powers and habits, are his immense wealth and his prudential management. But, above all, his origin gives him a prestige above that of almost any man living. People behold the son of a mechanic standing before the throne, or at the front of the aristocratic party in the legislature. His elevation imposes on the imagination of men, who thus give him credit for greater powers of mind than he really possesses. Now, let the world mark well the distinction between a man *raising* himself on the suffrages of a vast majority of his countrymen, and another *raised* up to aid and promote the interests of a party opposed

figure of Peel, or what is meant for him, is seen in all shapes and sizes in the attitude of feeling pulses, examining tongues, offering pills, administering physic, and performing all the operations of a Galen, even to dandling that royal babe, on whose brows—but it is to be hoped at a very distant date—is afterwards to be placed the diadem of imperial power.

Now, it will scarcely be believed, that this image, to which he has been so much indebted for the laugh that has been raised at him, (it is a trick of statesmen to adopt these things to carry off attention from graver matters) was actually the creation of his late brother William Peel, who used it in Parliament in 1831, and whose very idea has been adopted without acknowledgment by Sir Robert Peel.—See Appendix No 3.

in principle and action to the advance of the people to influence and power.

Had Peel remained in his politics on the side of the people, from which he sprang, he would have ranked as a fourth or fifth rate character, among the active men in parliament. But by his elevation to the front rank of the party opposed to the people, he has in his career inflicted a deeper wound on the popular cause than he could have advanced it by his talents, had he originally stood by it. History, in fifty years, will have pronounced a final judgment on the qualities, the principles, the actions, and the character of PEEL.

THE CONCLUSION.

IN treating on Monarchy, Aristocracy, or Democracy, and explaining their principles, and describing their operation on society, an institution or system is considered, which in idea may be embodied in a principle, and contemplated without reference to person; and this idea may be extended even to the distinction between absolute monarchy, and limited or constitutional monarchy. We look at the institution, or principle, as existing in a country independent of person. According to the British fiction, the king never dies.

When the monarch in person appears under notice, the matter becomes personal history or royal biography; and we then consider the effect which personal qualities and character shall produce on the system or institution of monarchy. Great good, or evil, is the result of the qualities, virtuous or vicious, of the monarch. A people may enjoy more comfort, quiet, and happiness, and feel as safe, under the rule of an absolute sovereign, as another people under the government of a king, whose power is limited and restricted within constitutional laws. The first may be a man of finely-balanced temperament, of a humane disposition, and with a head and a heart each in its proper place. The constitutional king may be of an opposite character; and although he cannot stretch his arm to take the life, or seize the property, of the meanest of his subjects, still he

may torment all the classes of society by a striving at prerogatives, by a meddling and restless disposition, by a spiteful temper introduced into party contentions, and by licentious and extravagant habits of life.

The idea of a democracy is that of the concentrated will and determination of many millions of men; and, according to the course of action taken, carries with it beneficence, terror, or sublimity. No monarch on earth, however absolute on his throne, or at the head of his mighty armies, possesses a power so effective and concentrated, as the chief magistrate of a democracy; while its territory is threatened by a foreign enemy, or during the operations of foreign war.

In bringing to a close these sketches of the effects of Aristocracies on the Condition and Revolutions of Nations, we are desirous of applying to the British aristocratic body, the remarks on the abstract nature of the institution or system of Aristocracy. But, as we have to deal practically with an existing system, we must assail this system, and grapple with its principles, through persons, and must endeavour to move these persons by the usual means of bringing facts, and employing reason, argument, and illustration, to effect a change in favour of the other classes of society, who are injured by the too great power and undue influence of the aristocratic body.

A man who gives a great deal of attention to a subject of this nature, and, after much thought and anxious reflection, comes to such conclusions as are described in this work; and when this man steps out of his retirement, and voluntarily imposes on himself the duty of addressing the public on matters which very deeply concern every individual at present living in this country, he must not flinch

from stating the full case that he has undertaken to explain, and, as an advocate, he must not shrink from uttering what he believes to be the truth, however unwelcome this truth may be to other parties. He must be firmly convinced of the accuracy of his conclusions, arrived at through an analytical process, and he must have entered with earnestness into the subject, carried it on with earnestness, and be quite in earnest in bringing it to an end.

Many of the subjects treated of in this book are very beaten ones; but where can any new doctrine be found among the harsh matters of British fiscal political history? The author has treated the subjects in various styles, if an unpractised writer can be said to have any style at all. What he means is, that he expressed himself exactly as he felt. At times he could not avoid expressing himself in terms which may appear to the reader too strong.

But when a man reflects on the educational destitution which has been allowed to exist, until the terrors of the government were roused to the subject by the outbreak of August 1842, he cannot help expressing himself strongly, if he express any thing at all;* and again, on the perversion of originally benevolent institutions and the misappropriation of charitable funds.

On the state of the mining population of this country, the evidence is so fearful, that the government would most

* In a note at page 95, a remark is made that the sum voted for national education scarcely amounts to as much as is expended on her Majesty's hounds. Such an observation is of course not literal, but yet it approaches in substance to the truth. Upwards of £70,000 were expended in accommodation for the royal horses and dogs—say, for stables and kennels.

The sums expended for education in England were		£76,698
Ditto	ditto in Wales	3,413
		<hr/> £80,111

See letter from J. P. Kay Shuttleworth to Sir James Graham, April 5, 1843.

willingly suppress it. The pension-list, and the questions thereon, are now old questions, but they were necessary for the illustration of the principles and effects of the primogenial law: the country cared little for the fraction of a million of money that was lavished, but it was irritated and annoyed by the support and justification of a system which contained so much meanness and so much injustice. With regard to the circumstances of corrupt practices at the election of 1841, and the dereliction of principle displayed by public men, we need do nothing more than refer to the speeches made by the leading men in parliament descriptive or condemnatory of the bribery, and of the unaccountable change of opinion in parliament from what was expressed out of it. The description of having laughed at the people out of doors, and at principle in parliament, is not too strong when applied to the professions and conduct of some honourable members.

In carrying on our warfare and supporting our position, we have used the effective missiles of statistical facts—the ponderous club of reason, as far as we could lift it, and the small-arms of ridicule, with the slender fence of satire. But metaphors apart, it may be truly said, that ink perfumed with rose-water is not the fluid to embody on paper the thoughts which any part of British fiscal regulations awaken in the mind of the person who gives his attention to them.

However severe the expression of condemnation of systems and measures may be considered in some instances, the truth must rest on the analytical results exhibited, and these are submitted to examination.

In strictures on public men and their measures, there have been no personal resentments to gratify, and no party object, as it is called, to advance. The author has pre-

sumed to pass his opinion on living public characters with the same freedom as he would review the history of men a hundred years in their graves. The prominent public man* of the day in this country must of course be frequently alluded to ; and as he has placed himself in that situation, he cannot now escape from the responsibility of it. It is most remote from the design of the Author to become the censor of public men, and the scrutator of their conduct, and he only does so as he finds himself personally affected and injured by their measures along with many hundred thousands of his countrymen.

In conclusion—This country must settle its accounts with the Aristocracy as it may think proper. At this time it presents the appearance of profound tranquillity, broken only by the agonizing throes of Ireland, struggling, as usual, for the refuse of its soil ; and by the outrages of miners in the West of England.

Although all the great interests of the country are in a state of derangement, and many of them in a state of decadence—and the public revenue refuses to raise its amount to the level of the demands on it ; still all the outward signs of prosperity are undisturbed. Ministers of state, and all the officers of government, civil, military, and ecclesiastical, receive their regular stipends, and the Bank pays the accustomed dividends.

In the legislature, party-strife has subsided, and we behold as it were the beginning of a parliamentary millennium. Newspapers have discussions on legislative acts to deprive poor men of the services of their dogs ; and they cease to tear, abuse, and calumniate public men. The minds of the people are calm and apparently apathetic, or

* Sir Robert Peel.

are only roused by the division of churches on points of temporalities, or excited by religious metaphysical sects, or alarmed, or amused, or enlightened, by the introduction of candles into the ceremonies of religion.

But is this a calm, or a lull? Of what use is it for Ireland to demand redress for her deep wrongs, of a legislature composed of men indifferent to her fate or interested in her miseries ! The distressed and attenuated artisans of the manufacturing districts consider the dominant party as inimical to their very existence, and they no longer cry to it for help, but bear, with the resigned patience of despair, their destitution and miseries.

The nation is absorbed in profound thought, and is looking with anxiety at the prospects which are opening before it ; and it must shortly make up its mind whether an Aristocracy shall be compelled to do justice, or a People remain impoverished and unhappy ; and more than that, it must decide in the extreme case, whether an Aristocracy shall survive, or a People perish.

A P P E N D I X.

No. 1.

DECENNIAL PERIODS IN BRITISH HISTORY have been distinguished by Events and Occurrences highly important and interesting to the British people.—Let the people make up their minds for 1852.

- 1642.—First blow struck in the great civil war, by Charles the First demanding in person of the House of Commons, the delivery of Hampden, Pym, Holles, Hazlerigg and Stoud.—A great national necessity imposed the odious excise taxes, which have been retained for two hundred years, to save the land-tax and other taxes on property.
- 1652.—The Commonwealth established.—The famous navigation laws, 1651.—An act of parliament for the union with Scotland.—Terrible wars with the Dutch for the command of the narrow seas.
- 1662.—The death of Cromwell in 1658, prepared the way for the restoration of Charles the Second.—The marriage of the king with a princess of Portugal.—The sale of Dunkirk to the French for £500,000, to supply funds for the extravagance of the unprincipled King of England.
- 1672.—The exchequer was shut up by order of the king, with advice of his unprincipled counsellors.—An act of public bankruptcy which ruined bankers and capitalists.—A bloody war still with the Dutch
- 1682.—This year was marked by corrupt court-prosecutions through packed juries, and the king succeeded in getting the parliament completely under his power.—The very country was in danger of being sold.
- 1692.—This is the fourth year after the Revolution, and the accession of William of Orange.—Ireland reduced and brought in as the third section of the kingdom.—The famous land-tax bill passed.—An invasion of England threatened by France in favour of the claims of James II.—The French fleet defeated off

- the Hogue.—The bill for triennial parliaments passed the two houses of parliament, but was rejected by the king, who, however gave his assent a few years afterwards.
- 1702.—The death of William and accession of Queen Anne to the throne, by deed of settlement by parliament.—Negotiations set on foot for a permanent union of England and Scotland.—A *perpetual* pension of £5,000 voted by the parliament by command of the queen on making Marlborough a duke.
- 1712.—This year is celebrated for the peace negotiated after a war of ten years, for objects of continental dynasties of no interest to the people of Great Britain.—Representation made by parliament to the queen on the hardship of the expenses incurred in the war.—England paid £19,000,000 more than her just quota.—The public revenue was about £5,700,000 of which £2,000,000 was raised by tax on land.
- 1722.—This year is remarkable for the declaration or manifesto of the Pretender to the throne of Great Britain, then occupied by George of Hanover.—Also for the dissolution of the first septennial parliament, which event was celebrated by public rejoicings.—A general desire for a return to triennial parliaments.
- 1732.—The introduction of a machine for the silk manufactures on improved principles.—The following year the excise scheme was introduced into parliament with a view to relieve the landed interest, which nearly threw the nation into revolution.—But the measure was abandoned by the government.
- 1742.—A war going on for German and other continental interests to gratify George II.—Great abuses in the expenditure of the public money.—£1,400,000 spent in ten years in bribes and other secret services.—The solicitor of the Treasury was committed to Newgate for refusing to answer questions touching the disposal of public money.—A motion for the repeal of the Septennial act rejected by the Commons.—Walpole created an earl with a pension of £4,000 a year.
- 1752.—The Gregorian or New Style was fixed by an act of parliament to commence this year.
- 1762.—George the Third ascended the throne in 1760, and the act of settlement passed the following year.—The Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV. born.—War declared against Spain.—The Havannah taken by the British.—Treaty of peace with France signed at Fontainebleau.—The question of general warrants began to be discussed the following year.
- 1772.—In a decision by Lord Mansfield, respecting a negro slave, the sanctity of the British soil was declared.—This was an important year for Europe.—A revolution in Denmark, and another in Sweden; and the spoliatory partition of Poland, between Russia, Prussia, and Austria.—The first act of the

great North American Revolution took place.—This year was marked by the distress of the common people, who stopped the provision-carts coming into London, and sold the provisions at reduced prices.

- 1782.—This year was very celebrated for its events : 1st. Motion for a Reform of the People's House of Commons, by William Pitt, supported by Chas. J. Fox, lost by 161 against 141 votes. —2nd. Termination of the American war, by the acknowledgment of the Independence of the United States.—3d. Great naval victory in the West Indies by Lord Rodney.—4th. Defeat of the grand attack of the united forces of Spain and France on Gibraltar.—5th. Peace concluded, the beginning of the following year, with France and Spain.
- 1792.—The epoch of the breaking out of the great French Revolutionary War.—Domestic affairs of the country were agitated. —The people longed for relief—Parliamentary reform again attempted.—First embassy sent to the Emperor of China.
- 1802.—The Peace of Amiens afforded a breathing-time of a few months, during the terrible French war.
- 1812.—A blow was struck by the Almighty, through the elements, on Napoleon, in Russia, from which he never recovered.—About this time, Europe presented the horrors of battles between the people of nations, rather than between armies.—The slaughter was almost by hundreds of thousands.—At home, a twenty years' war produced a savage disposition among individuals — Murders of unparalleled atrocity were committed in private dwellings.—The prime-minister of the government was coolly assassinated on entering the House of Commons.—A war against machinery was carried on.—Distress among the people, from high prices of provisions.—War broke out with the Americans.
- 1822.—Corn laws relaxed from 80s. to 70s. a quarter of wheat, for importation into the country.—A motion made in the House of Commons for a reform of parliament, thrown out by 296 votes to 164.—This year, together with the two or three previous years, may in one respect be considered the most degraded period in the British annals.—The corn-law of 1815, after a war of unparalleled sacrifices by the nation, was a badge of subjection of the people to a cruel oligarchy.—The infamy of the prosecution of Queen Caroline stamps the year 1820 ; and her death, in the following year, in consequence of the torturing insults offered to her, falls on George IV. and his subservient Aristocracy.—The Asiatic character of the government by a system of espionage, and the insurrectionary movements of masses of the people, deluded through their misery, stand unique in British history.—George IV. visited Ireland and Scotland, in hopes of being able, by personal address and courtly manners, to

diminish or remove the odium entertained of his character for his proceedings against his Queen.—His minister Castlereagh committed suicide.

This year is remarkable for a combination of monarchs against the liberties of nations.—This was called the HOLY ALLIANCE.

This year forms the era of the final liberation of the colonies formerly under the dominion of Spain.

1832.—Parliamentary Reform, which was constructive sedition in 1792, was statute-law in 1832.—The French Revolution, among its other consequences, has had that of retarding for forty years a salutary change in the British constitution.—But, as a compensation, the second Revolution of 1830 stimulated the British people to put forth their energies.—The conduct of the people throughout the crisis was calm, orderly, and determined, and altogether worthy of their character; but, in pushing measures to remedy defects and supply deficiencies in the Reform Act of 1832, they will again require to unite, and act with caution, judgment, and resolution.

1842.—This year will for ever be memorable as the ERA of the commencement of the great struggle to free the nation from the worst species of fiscal despotism.—The fate of the nation was hung in suspense, in its domestic concerns and foreign relations, in a very remarkable manner.—In England, Scotland, and Ireland, great masses of the population suffered an extremity of misery which nature could no longer endure, and the country presented the outward signs of domestic convulsion, but without destruction of property or life.—Abroad, in Afghanistan and China, military reverses and successes excited the fears and hopes, and at length gratified the desires, of the people.—The treaty with the United States settled several points which always threatened war, and in this respect it ought to be hailed as a blessing.

1852.

What will be the state of affairs in Great Britain and Ireland in 1852? Under God, the electors of the United Kingdom, supported by the great bulk of the population, must answer the question.

It has been tauntingly said by some French writer, that the British people are only free and powerful during a general election for members to the Legislature—or rather, the electoral body of the people.

THREE *Points to be fixed.*

1st.—Wide extension of the right of voting for members to the Commons House of Parliament.

2d —Security for the independence of the voters, and the destruction of the system of bribery.

3rd —Parliament to be dissolved, and a new one to be elected every three years.

Septennial Parliaments are *condemned*.—Triennial Parliaments are approved, and supported by historical precedent—by justice—by arithmetical average—and by *actual fact*.

1st. Triennial Parliaments, established shortly after the Revolution.

2d. The first Septennial Parliament sat while rebellious movements were going on in the country.—“Give us an inch, and we will take an ell,” was the motto of the first seven-years’ parliament, and it has been copied by every one, to the session of 1842.

3d. Several terms are proposed by political parties, for the duration of parliaments.—One party proposes one year, another three years, and a third the continuation of seven years.—Now, it will be found, that the medium of these three numbers is just three years and two-thirds; and, as fractions are not wanted, the lucky number THREE decides the duration of parliament.

4th. But actual historical fact has settled three years as the term for British’ parliaments, since the union with Ireland at the beginning of the present century.—Including the existing one elected in 1841, there have been fourteen parliaments since 1800, which give an average of THREE years to each. This is an important point established, and will save the various parties in favour of shortening the duration of parliament a great deal of trouble. With so many circumstances uniting in favour of number THREE, it would be folly to think of any other.

Note for the Years 1702, 1742, and 1842.

It will be remarked, that in the first, there is recorded the grant of a perpetual pension of £5,000 a year, to the heirs or successors of the Duke of Marlborough.—Without any desire to tear one leaf from the laurel-crown of that general, there can be no harm in stating the fact, that he was amply rewarded with property and honours, in his day and generation. At the end of 140 years, the pension is actually paid to his representative, out of a fund which conceals from the public eye this burden on the people. It was originally secured on the post-office revenue, and is still paid out of the admirable penny-postage system. As the first duke was a historical character, and the present one is a peer, who votes on a tax bill, it is well to allude to the generally-reported state of circumstances of the family. The hard matter-of-fact is—the nation is paying £5,000 a year to a man to support him in a position uncomfortable to himself, and of no good whatever to the country.

With regard to the £4,000 granted to Walpole, in 1742, we are not able to say whether it is continued to the present day or not.

We now come to the practical results. General Keane, who led the British army into Affghanistan, and captured Ghuznee, has been raised to the peerage, with a pension of £2,000 a year, for his own life, and for two other lives. What principle guides such transactions ? and where are such transactions to end ? According to the rule of three of pensionary arithmetic—If a general receive a title and £2,000 a year for three lives, for leading an army into a country where it was massacred ; how many titles and pensions ought the general to receive who leads another army to avenge the loss of the first, and effectually succeeds in the enterprise ?—Answer—to be given.
—Or—

If so much be given in honour of a disastrous war, which cost a very great many millions of sovereigns, how much should be bestowed on the conductors of a war which was eminently successful, and realized a clear balance of a great many millions of dollars ? Answer—to be given.

It is to teach the government the rules for the solution of such military financial questions, and to establish the principles of fair-play and even-handed justice, that the electors of this country are recommended to bestir themselves, and save their own pockets.

No. 2.

LET THE PEOPLE BEWARE OF MAJORITIES OF ONE.

A political adventurer, with his political conscience in an empty pocket—or, a simple spendthrift bankrupt boy, with an aristocratic appellation, might, in the British legislature, at a particular crisis, have the casting vote on a question which should decide the fate of the nation. The idea is as awfully serious, as it is extremely ridiculous.—Remember 1852 !

1689.—Some of the questions at the Revolution were carried in the Legislature by very small majorities

1689.—A bill for restoring ancient rights and privileges to corporations was carried by a majority of One vote

1692.—A bill passed by the House of Commons to incapacitate certain persons holding civil and military offices, from having

- seats in parliament, was thrown out by the House of Peers by a majority of Two votes.
- 1713.—A motion made in the House of Peers to dissolve the Union between England and Scotland, was thrown out by 71 votes against 69.—Majority of Two votes.
- 1742.—A motion made in the House of Commons to refer the papers relative to the German wars of George II. was thrown out in a house of 503 members present, by a majority of Three votes.
- 1780.—A motion respecting pensioners and placemen was defeated by the ministry by a majority of Two votes.
- 1782.—A motion in the House of Commons to address the king that the war with the United States of America might cease, was thrown out by 193 against 192 One vote.
- 1796.—A bill brought in by Mr. Pitt to tax the descent of landed property the same as personal property, after having passed through every stage but the third, was carried the third reading by a majority of One; but on the question, that the bill do pass, there was an equality of votes, whereupon Mr. Pitt withdrew the bill One vote.
and equality
- 1831.—The second reading of the REFORM BILL was carried on the 22d of March in the House of Commons, by 302 against 301, majority of One vote.
- Year uncertain.*—A committee of the House of Commons decided in favour of the Trigonometrical Survey of the British Islands by a majority of One vote.
- 1841.—THE PARTY-STRUGGLE TO TAX THE PEOPLE.—On the 4th of June, the motion of Want of Confidence which led to the change of administration, and the establishment of that under Sir Robert Peel, was carried by 312 against 311—Majority of One vote.
- 1842.—A motion to receive a petition *against* the Income Tax, was negatived in the House of Commons on the 11th of April by 222 against 221 votes.—Majority of One vote.
- 1842.—A motion that all gates opening on railways should be kept locked by the proprietors of adjoining lands, for the security of the public, was lost on the 22d April, by 104 votes against 103.—Majority One vote.
- 1842.—Another motion for a clause in a railway bill for adding to the convenience of the public, was lost on 19th of June by 41 votes to 40.—Majority of One vote.
- 1843.—A motion in the House of Commons to bring in a bill to establish a court for marriage and divorce was carried on 30th March by the casting vote of the speaker, there being for the bill 47 and against it 47 Casting vote.

- 1843.—On the 3d April the House of Peers threw out the “Dog BILL” by the casting vote of the Lord Chancellor—Contents 14, non-contents 14 Casting vote.

INSTANCES OF SMALL MAJORITIES IN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLIES
OF FOREIGN NATIONS.

An important measure for the Roman people was carried by a majority of One vote. This was a bill for the division and appropriation of the lands and houses of the city of Veii, taken by assault by the Romans, thrown out by eleven tribes against ten. The rejection of the bill secured a larger assignment of the lands to the Roman citizens.—This took place in the year of the city 362.

The King of France, Louis XVI., was condemned to death by a very small majority of votes.

In North American History—

1745.—The expedition from New England to Cape Breton was carried in the legislature of Massachusetts by a majority of One vote.

1774.—The majorities in congress on the essential points and principles of the Declaration of Rights were but one, two, or three votes.—All the great critical questions from 1774 to 1778, were decided by the vote of a single State, and that often by the vote of one individual One vote.

The declaration of independence was itself so carried. One vote.

1794.—Most of the acts of congress in the memorable session of 1794 were carried by the casting vote of the vice-president One vote.

The constitution of the United States resulted from a majority of one vote of the State of New York One vote.

The first bank of the United States failed to be rechartered by the casting vote of the vice-president One vote.

The late bank of the United States was negatived, when first proposed, by the speaker's casting vote.

1842.—The tariff for the United States was carried in 1842, by 116 votes to 112, but had all the members been present the majority would have been One vote.

The engrossment of the bill was ordered by 112 against 111 votes.

1843.—The bill to authorize the occupation of the Oregon territory, which might have led to a war between Great Britain and the United States, was carried in the American senate in February 1843 by 24 to 22.—Majority of . . . Two votes.

1843.—In the French Chamber of Deputies, in March 1843, a motion by the minister, to appropriate two millions of francs to aid the construction of a railway, was lost by 164 to 166. Majority of Two votes.

It is almost unnecessary to say that the main object of giving the foregoing list of small majorities carrying great and important measures, is to direct attention to the necessity of the electors and the mass of the people being on the alert in all matters of interest to the country. Every person from his own reading will be able to add to the list of majorities of one. If so many have occurred in the legislature, how many more in individual elections of members !

No. 3.

A FEW SIBYLLINE LEAVES BLOWN OUT.

The opposition to the reform of the corrupt system of the old representation of the people, and to the political enfranchisement of about half a million of respectable and enlightened citizens, throughout England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, was characterised by an obstinacy—by a mistrust of the independent intelligent classes of society—by a cupidity of disposition—and by a want of political sagacity, which the history of no other country ever presented. The following extracts are taken almost at random, on turning over the pages of Barrow's "Parliamentary Reports of the Debates in the House of Commons, in the years 1831 and 1832," and will serve, at the present time, to remind the electors in the three kingdoms, created by the Act of Reform, of the libels which were thrown on them, by anticipation, during the discussions of that great but still inefficient measure.

It would be well, that the opinions expressed by Sir Robert Peel, as contained in the extracts from his reported

speeches in 1831 and 1832, be noted. These opinions contain the key to the knowledge of his whole political character. His care and anxiety for the preservation of the privileges of the voters of his own snug borough, show the utter selfishness of his political temper. His school, established at his own expense, to teach the young idea how to expand in his own political atmosphere, is not an original idea of his.*

At this particular period, the opinions that he expressed, during the discussion on the Reform Bill, on the probable control of the people over their own taxation, and his dread of them acquiring that power, must be registered indelibly in the memory.

SIR ROBERT HARRY INGLIS.—March 1, 1831. Barrow, p. 567.

The Sovereign, the Peers, and the Constitution in danger.

‘I say, then, in proportion as you increase the influence of the popular will in this House, you risk the existence of the Sovereign, and the House of Peers. The thing may not happen to-day or to-morrow, but I am firmly convinced, if the proposed plan be agreed to, that in the course of ten years, the shock must be decisive. If such a measure as that of the noble lord’s be carried, it will strike at the very foundation of the constitution, and lead to the utmost confusion.’

HORACE TWISS—March 1, 1831.

Sneers at the Ten-pound Voters.

‘But the extensive destruction now contemplated is resolved on for no other end than that of calling in, for the rescue of the state in these difficult times, the counsel of the inhabitants of certain towns, who happen to live in houses of £10 annual value.’

* This refers to the School founded by the late Sir Robert Peel, in the borough of Tamworth, to exist as long as one of his family should be returned by the borough to Parliament. This is the most insidious and dangerous mode of bribery that could be adopted, and the idea must have been taken from the practice of Voltaire, and the French philosophers, who never rested until they got the public schools under their influence, through the teachers, and thereby secured the minds of the rising generation. One of Sir Robert Peel’s advocates (*Morning Post*, 20th Oct. 1841,) stated, as a proof of the impartiality of the school, that two-thirds of the boys educated, were the children of his political opponents. Of course, the wily politician carried the war into his enemies’ country!

‘ Putting the control of public men and of public measures into the hands of persons, of whom a large portion must be men of narrow habits, scanty information, and strong prejudices—little shopkeepers, and small attorneys.’

MR. ALEX. BARING—March 3, 1831.

Subversion of Institutions, and Loss of Liberties.

‘ Whatever may be the necessity or expediency arising from the result of the public scrutiny of this measure, nothing can shake my deep-rooted opinion of it, nor induce me to give my consent to the subversion of those institutions, which have so long and so happily sheltered and fostered the industry and the liberties of Englishmen.’

Scotland is represented.

‘ But when I state the representation of Scotland wants alteration, I must say that I believe Scotland is virtually and really represented in this House.’

MR. ALEX. BARING—July 20, 1831. p. 719.

People not to be trusted.

‘ The people are no more to be trusted with power, than children with edge-tools.’

House of Commons influenced by the Aristocracy.

‘ The House of Commons has always been essentially influenced by the Aristocracy. The honourable member for Norwich told his constituents, in the course of his election, that the Peers nominated one-half of this House.’

The Country in danger.

‘ To talk of private interest, as influencing the opposition to this bill, is ridiculous: for what private interest can be served by the ruin of the country?’

MR. BARING—March 3, 1831.

Land-Tax in France twenty per cent.

‘ The average land-tax of France is about one-fifth of the rent.

MR. J. S. HOPE—7th March, 1831, p. 702.

Electors are poor and ignorant.

‘ In my opinion, we are about to confer the elective franchise on those who have neither sufficient property, nor sufficient education, to guarantee a just and correct use of that privilege.’

MR. PERCEVAL—9th March, p. 757.

The Reform Bill will be the death-blow to the monarchy.—He has no doubt on the subject.

‘I am confident, Sir, that the hour this bill passes into a law, the death-blow of the monarchy is struck.

‘I have not a wavering or shadow of doubt on this subject, and I have no power of body or of mind, that I will not devote to check its progress in every stage.

* * * * *

‘In conclusion, I beg to express my regret, that I have been so little able to deliver the many thoughts that have arisen in my mind and my heart, during the many nights this debate has lasted, and the many sleepless nights it has led to; but, I humbly thank my God that I have been permitted to say thus much; and having endeavoured to do my duty, shall be content.’

MR. CROKER—19th March, 1831.

This individual is agonized at the apprehension of anarchy with its horrors and miseries.

‘There is as great a difference between the £10 clause as proposed by the government, and as it at present stands, as there is between reformation and revolution. . . . If the bill shall unhappily pass, and become a law, I will assert, and I believe it from the bottom of my heart, and that belief is formed after the most anxious and agonizing reflections, that it will put an extensive power in the hands, not of the people, but of the populace, who will soon destroy their own work like a toy—will pull down the legislature and the State.

* * * * *

‘They will go on from bad to worse, having no other guide but their passions.

‘But will it end here? No! Anarchy, with all its horrors and miseries, will ensue.

SIR ROBERT INGLIS—19th March, 1831.

A corporation of 33 persons is of more importance than 7,000 citizens at £10 a year.

‘The constituency of Bath, consists of a mayor, 8 aldermen and 24 common-councilmen, while under the proposed bill, the right of voting will extend to more than 7,000 persons renting £10 houses.’

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The constitution will be sacrificed.

‘I will never consent to sacrifice that constitution under which the glory and the happiness of the country has so long grown together, and especially without something like proof that we are about to exchange it for a better.’

Mr. TREVOR—20th March, 1831.

The property, the church, and the monarchy will be destroyed.

‘In conclusion, I will say, that the more I reflect on this measure, the more I see in it the destruction of the property of the country—of the religious establishments of the country, and, though last, not least of the monarchy itself of the country.’

Sir EDWARD SUGDEN, 22d March, 1831.

He speaks in favour of his countrymen, but votes against them.

‘Let it not be supposed, that I wish to maintain the Aristocracy, merely as an Aristocracy: I have no such a desire; but, I do wish to maintain the Aristocracy for the benefit of the lower orders themselves; and in doing so, I believe that I am supporting their best interests. This is my sincere and honest feeling. Indeed it is impossible that I could act from any other motives on this point; sprung as I am from the humblest class of society myself, I have no motive, no desire, indeed I could have none, to fly in the face of my fellow-countrymen, and to deprive them of the rights which they enjoy.’

‘I am convinced that a reformed parliament, such as would be returned by a £10 constituency, would go far to shake the stability of the throne.’ . . . ‘I am sure that there is not an institution in the country that will not be shaken by this measure.’

Reform Debate—Ten-Pound Qualification.

Sir EDWARD SUGDEN—July 8, 1831.

The unhappy condition of the ten-pound voter.

‘Now, a person cannot be put down in the lists unless he has paid up the whole of his rent and taxes to the day of registration.

‘How would this operate with the £10 householder? When he goes to get registered, he will be asked whether he has paid up all his rent, taxes, and rates, and will be desired to produce receipts.

‘But how can you compel the landlord or the tax-gatherer to receive the rent or rates at a particular time, and to give receipts? If the poor man is anxious about his vote, he becomes involved in litigation with his landlord, whenever he wishes to vote!’

LORD PORCHESTER—March 22, 1831.

Reform in Scotland would have the worst and most dangerous results.

‘I am far from saying that no change whatever should be made in the Scottish representation, but I certainly do think, that the abolition of the old system, and the substitution of a popular constituency, in that part of the kingdom, would be attended with the very worst and most dangerous results.’

MR. SHELLEY—March 2, 1831.

Lawyers, Bankers, and Merchants have no hopes under the Reform Bill.

‘I am satisfied that if the proposed measure pass into a law, no one but those who have local interest in the country—none but persons having means, and opportunity, and time to cultivate an intimacy and connection with the voters, in some districts of the country, can ever hope to obtain a seat in this House. The lawyer, and the banker, and the merchant may therefore bid farewell to these walls for ever.’

SIR GEORGE WARRENDER—March 7, 1831.

The Scottish Reformers are Catalines, and would be robbers!

‘The reformers of Scotland are like the Roman reformer, Cataline, who was “*alieni appetens*!”’

MR. WILLIAM PEEL—March 7, 1831.

He takes physic, and spouts heroics.

‘It was, sir, because I was satisfied that the dose would not go down. I felt that the “purge” would not pass. Sir, the practice of the noble Lord certainly differs from that of physicians in general; some of them profess to cure, while others adopt the principle of kill or cure.

‘And why may we not have other practitioners come forward at a future time to administer physic to us? Why may we not have Dr. Hume and Dr. Warburton coming forward?’

‘I may feel warmly on this subject, for I, and that family of which I am a branch, by the blessing of a good government, and the exertions of our predecessors, have lived to enjoy very many advantages, and under such auspices have risen to independence, and consequently to rank; and I feel that I should be worse than a villain, were I to raise a hand in assisting to demolish that vene-

‘able fabric, that constitution, which to me, to my family, and to my fellow-countrymen, has proved a shelter and protection in every danger.’

He ends—

‘I call upon every man who objects to the destruction of all property, to reject this unconstitutional measure, which, if carried into effect, must end in the overthrow of the monarchy, and the annihilation of all existing rights and privileges.’

SIR ROBERT PEEL—March 3.

He tries to preserve his borough—argumentum ad hominem.

On threat of a dissolution, by government of Russell, he says—

‘I will tell my constituents, 400 or 500 in number—many of them not paying a rent of £10, but entitled to vote, as resident householders pay church and poor-rates—I will tell them, that to this bill, brought in without proof, or even argument of its necessity, so far as it concerns them, I oppose myself to the utmost extent of my power; I will tell them that I did my utmost to preserve to them the privilege they at present enjoy, and which the humblest of them never abused, by the solicitation or acceptance of a bribe.’

SIR ROBERT PEEL—March 22.

He foresees the utmost danger from the Reform Act.

‘I can only repeat that you are running great and unnecessary hazards, in the extensive changes you are about to adopt; and that in the bearing of these changes upon several important interests, I see the utmost danger. I see great danger in their bearing, with respect to the future governing of this country.’

He dreads reduction of Taxation.

‘It is not my own original remark, though I do not remember having heard it mentioned in this House, that the whole weight of this reform is given to the debtor, and taken away from the creditor. The great mass of the people subject to taxation will acquire increased power, whereas the creditor has scarcely any influence at all.’

‘WHAT I FEAR IS, THAT A REFORMED PARLIAMENT WILL ACT UPON JUST THE SAME PRINCIPLES AS THOSE UPON WHICH THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT HAS ACTED—NAMELY, FROM A SINCERE DESIRE TO ALLEVIATE THE SUFFERINGS OF THE PEOPLE, BY MAKING AN EXTENSIVE REDUCTION OF THE TAXES. Then will come a fall in the revenue, by some such events as have recently occurred with regard to the West Indies, which will occasion a deficit in the Treasury.’

His name bears the reproach of having perseveringly opposed the political liberty of his countrymen.

‘That my name may escape from the reproach of having yielded—that I may not be visited with that censure which will naturally arise from the evils, public and private, which I foresee this bill must create—that I may carry with me, through all the vicissitudes of private and of public fortune, the satisfaction of having struggled in this conflict with perseverance, but without effect, and the consolation of having surrendered without dishonour—my last vote shall be given as my first, in opposition to the measure.’

Reform Bill.

22nd March, 1832

For the third reading,	-	-	-	-	355
Against it,	-	-	-	-	239
					<hr/>
Majority,					116

MR. MACAULAY—March 2.

Advice.

‘Now is the moment when the great debt due from the Aristocracy to the people should be paid; and which, if paid, will never be forgotten by those whose prosperity it will ensure.’

LORD STANLEY—March 9.

A Warning.

‘I tell those honourable gentlemen, that a spirit is now abroad which will be heard—which will make itself audible in this House, even by those unwilling to listen to it.’

Opinions of LORD CHATHAM.

‘If this House does not reform itself from within, it will be reformed with a vengeance from without.’

No. 4.

Testimonials which ought to have their weight with the Electors of Great Britain and Ireland:—

[Queen's Speech, 3d February, 1842.]

‘I have observed with deep regret the continued distress in the manufacturing districts of the country. The sufferings and privations which have resulted from it have been borne with exemplary patience and fortitude.’

[Speech of Lord Stanley at the Lord Mayor's Banquet, 17th Jan. 1842]

‘ I will venture to say, that it is impossible for any one returning from the imposing ceremony of this day to have witnessed, as we have done, the countless multitudes thronging the streets of this great metropolis, orderly, peaceably, and well disposed in their demeanour—a scene which no other country could have exhibited in such a mass, coerced by no force except that of moral feeling and interest.’

[Speech of Sir Robert Peel in the House of Commons, 9th Feb. 1842.]

‘ The period since the separation of parliament, though concurrent with severe commercial distress and great suffering on the part of the population, has been marked by as much moderation and calmness in the conduct of those who viewed the adjustment of this law as their remedy for their distress, as could possibly be expected under the circumstances. There may have been excitement and ill-feeling in some instances ; but I must say, that the conduct of the great body of the people of this country, exposed to commercial and manufacturing distress, has been such as to entitle them to great praise and the utmost sympathy. There is no difficulty interposed on the score of public tumult or popular violence . and it is perfectly open to parliament to legislate as they may wish on the subject.’

[Speech of Sir Robert Peel in the House of Commons, 27th May 1842.]

‘ Severe distress had existed in Paisley, but it had been borne there, as in other parts of the country, with the greatest fortitude and submission.’

State of Ireland.

[Extract of a Speech of Lord Eliot in the House of Commons, 28th June, 1842.]

‘ He thought it right to add, that with very few exceptions, the severe privations had been endured with exemplary fortitude, and that persons in a situation to afford relief had come forward in a very charitable and generous manner.’

[Sir J. Graham's speech in the House of Commons, 3d June, 1842]

‘ Sir James Graham, in answer, begged to state, that he had seen a placard, couched in terms of great violence. He had understood, with great regret, that it had been circulated at Manchester. The placard was anonymous, the only name attached to it being that of the printer. With respect to any step being taken by the government with regard to it, although the language was

‘inflammatory, he had to state with much pleasure, that on the whole, the great body of the people, though in severe distress, had conducted themselves with exemplary patience, and that no breach of the law of any consequence had taken place; and the government therefore would certainly take no step in the matter.’

Distresses and good Conduct of the People.

[Report of Sir R. Peel's speech on the Distresses of the Country, 1st July, 1842.]

‘I do give credit to the patience, the high spirit, and the forbearance with which the people of this country have borne their distress. I do believe, that if left to themselves, they would continue to manifest that patience; and I think them entitled to a higher degree of credit, in consequence of the persevering efforts that are made to inflame their minds, and provoke them into disobedience.’

* * * * *

‘It will not be for the interests of society, in times of severe suffering and distress, to goad those who are the sufferers into disobedience of the law, which must be repressed. I can only think those entitled to still higher admiration, who, in despite of such provocations, continue to submit to the law, and to manifest contentment and gratitude for those imperfect modes of relief, which are obliged to be substituted for more satisfactory and permanent ones.’

British Museum.

[Speech of Sir Robert Peel in the House of Commons, 14th July, 1842.]

‘The jealousy of admitting the public at large, I hope will be gradually removed. Indeed it is in evidence, that it is not the poorer classes who do the damage complained of, but the vulgar rich who can afford to pay the price of admission.’

[Sir Robert Peel, 12th August, 1842.]

‘He must say, that during a period of severe distress, and when the people manifested a degree of patience and fortitude under privations which reflected the greatest credit on them, attempts were made to inflame their passions, and exasperate them into violence.’

[Speech of C. Villiers, in the House of Commons, 8th July, 1842.]

‘The patience and endurance of the people were beyond all praise and while the powers of nature bore up, they would submit to and sufferings; but necessity had no laws, and there was a point beyond which they could not go.’

Starvation of the Irish People.

[Extracts from Letters from the Archbishop of Tuam, to Sir Robert Peel, dated St. Jarluth, Tuam.—Feast of St. John the Baptist, 24th June, 1842.]

‘The people from almost every district have become the heralds of their appalling destitution. Hunger has found organs for proclaiming its sufferings and its power far more eloquent than any language can convey. Already have its irresistible instinct been reducing to practice the theories of learned jurists on the community of property in cases of extreme distress; and though there is no friend to social order, that must not deplore that necessity, which would break down any of its fences, it is but justice to the mass of the sufferers to declare, that on the face of the earth, there is not, I am convinced, any other people who would endure the torments of hunger with such religious resignation. Such magnanimous patience ought not to be abused.

‘It is a bad and dangerous practice, to habituate men to the idea of appeasing the cravings of nature by means beyond the laws; yet at this moment, such is the pressure of famine, that those violations are committed. But what is still worse, if the dire distress that prompts them is not realized, others will resort to the same mischievous practices without any pleas of necessity to offer in extenuation.

‘Their sufferings are, alas, but too manifest.

‘Numbers in this very neighbourhood go to bed without tasting a morsel of food during the entire day, and some pass the second doomed to the same experiment.

‘In this sad statement, there is not a word of exaggeration on my part, nor have I been the dupe of delusion. No, I have made myself conversant with the details of misery.’

‘Poor-law houses will not be opened till the pressure of the hard season be passed.

‘Yet £60,000 to 70,000 have been expended on law-officers and poor-law functionaries.’

‘No honest politician can wish this country to be doomed to perpetual beggary.

‘Absentees vie with the proud patricians of England.’

‘And thus while the dishonest financier would be deducing from the exports of Ireland, proofs of its prosperity, the looker-on might, alas! as at this moment in many parts of this district, have to weep in silent pity, over the slow but certain starvation of the people.’

[Leading article of *Times* Newspaper, 21st Jan. 1842.]

‘In proportion as the leaguers and their designs have fallen in public estimation, and in the chances of success within the last six months, the character and influence of the operative class have risen. Both have come forward and explained their views of the existing distress and its remedies, and the superiority in every way, moral, intellectual, and practical, has been with the operatives.’

[Report made by the Society for obtaining free admission to National Monuments and Public Edifices containing Works of Art.]

‘The late free exhibition of the prize-pictures by the Art Union Society, evinces a strong, and evidently from the results, a well-timed confidence in the good conduct and taste of the public. The number of persons who availed themselves of the opportunity, was in three weeks seventy-two thousand, without the slightest accident or complaint of misconduct.’

[*Morning Chronicle* Newspaper, 4th February, 1842.]

‘The populace appeared resolved to be in good humour. They had congregated for the single purpose of witnessing a spirit-stirring spectacle, and not even the crushing which they had to bear seemed at all to disturb their equanimity.’

‘Indeed, from first to last, the whole proceeding was most creditable to the character and temper of the people. Their conduct was scrutinized, no doubt, with vigilance and curiosity by the King of Prussia, and from the evidence thus afforded, he cannot but admit that, under such exciting circumstances, the inhabitants of no metropolitan city in Europe could have deported themselves with more exemplary propriety, nor have evinced towards their sovereign those feelings of deferential respect, unaffected attachment, and unswerving loyalty, which are the peculiar characteristics of the English nation.’

[*Times* Newspaper, 4th February, 1842.]

‘Fêted and feasted as the King of Prussia has been, we doubt not that the scene which he yesterday witnessed, when the queen of a free people called together the great council of the empire, with all those time-hallowed ceremonies which have been handed down through a succession of ages, will make a more beneficial impression on his mind than aught else to which his attention may have been directed, though much which has been brought under his notice was well worthy of study and consideration.’

[Leading article of *London Morning Post* Newspaper, 11th Feb. 1842.]

‘ Let no man confound with the anti-corn-law people, with the great body of the distressed artisans. They are entitled to attention and commiseration. Even their mistakes ought to be received with patience, and set right with good temper.’

[*Morning Herald* Newspaper, 30th March, 1842.]

‘ It was computed that upwards of 13,000 persons visited the National Gallery on Monday, and 10,000 yesterday; and although at various periods of each day the heat was almost insupportable in consequence of the rooms being crowded nearly to suffocation, not an angry word was heard, and not the slightest damage was done to any portion of the exhibition, but the greatest order and good humour prevailed throughout.’

‘ At the venerable and splendid structure of Westminster Abbey, the visitors were very numerous both on Monday and yesterday, far exceeding any previous similar occasion, which probably may have arisen from the circumstance of the admission fees having been reduced to sixpence since June last. The high-constable reports that the visitors generally conduct themselves with the strictest propriety.’

‘ The visitors at St. Paul’s Cathedral were very few indeed, which may be attributed to the high price of admission, four shillings and twopence, which is still continued. The number could not be ascertained, but are supposed not to have exceeded fifty.’

[Leading article of *Morning Herald* 28th June, 1842.]

‘ The patience and orderly conduct which the working classes in our manufacturing districts have exhibited during the severe pressure of distress is a phenomenon upon which we may congratulate, not only the public, but the sufferers themselves. It reflects the highest credit upon their growing intelligence, and is, we trust, a guarantee for their early recovery from their present unfortunate condition. They have frequently been involved in similar calamities, but in no former crisis have they displayed the same sense of their true interests.’

[*Times*, July 7, 1842.]

‘ The present distress is an evil terrible in itself. The poor, as all seem to agree, have borne it with a most noble patience, in spite of such men as we have spoken of, and must ever speak of, with the scorn they deserve. The rich are debtors, deeply debtors, to the working classes for their patience. All are their debtors who are interested in the peace and order of the community. But in this

‘the sufferers have taken a course which, while it is most encouraging to others, is also happily the wisest for themselves.’

Extraordinary Honesty.

[*Times*, 19th July, 1842.]

‘Early on Monday morning a poor man presented himself, who explained that he was a groom out of employment, and that he had picked up notes amounting to £35, near Tottenham.

‘He had been seeking employment, and had not a shilling left when he found the packet. He returned towards London, and at a public-house mentioned his prize, and was offered £20 for it; the offer was repeated, but declined; and the groom, whose name is Joseph Lamb, having been informed of the advertisement, waited upon the person who had lost the money. We are happy to state that he was adequately rewarded, and has now a chance of employment.’

[*Times*, 10th October, 1842.]

‘As Mr. Wright, of Holles Street, Clare Market, was leaving a house which he had occupied for some time in Denmark Street, St. Giles, a few days ago, he allowed a poor man, named Williams, a gilder, who had been for upwards of eighteen months out of work, and was in the deepest distress, to remove some lumber, which appeared of no value. The following day, however, Williams called upon his benefactor, with a small box, containing £20, which had been deposited several years since, and forgotten among the lumber. We trust that the poor man, whose necessities must have been a powerful temptation to dishonesty, was adequately rewarded.’

An Argument in favour of a very wide Extension of the Elective Franchise.

[Sir R. Peel, in the House of Commons, 27th March, 1843.]

‘He might take that opportunity of saying, that last year 540,000 more persons visited the British Museum, than had entered the walls the year previous. During the last seventeen years, not an accident had happened to anything, except the fracture of two panes of glass by a little boy, by accident.

‘He mentioned this circumstance, not more to show the good conduct of the visitors, THAN TO CAUTION THOSE WHO HAD THE CHARGE OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS, AGAINST ARGUING IN OPPOSITION TO FREE ADMISSION, ON THE GROUND OF ANY FEAR OF INJURY PROCEEDING FROM THE PUBLIC MISCONDUCT.’

No 5.

Opinion of JOHN QUINCY ADAMS on the War between Great Britain and China, communicated in a Lecture on the Law of Nations; especially that part of it which relates to War between Nations: delivered to the Historical Society of Massachusetts, October, or November, 1841.

After explaining the general term "*Law of Nations*," and describing the anti-social state of the Chinese system, and the insulting conditions on which it condescended to admit foreign intercourse — terming foreigners "*Outside Barbarians*," and treating their nations with contempt, he says:

"It is humiliating to think, that not only the proudest monarchs of Europe, but the most spirited and enlightened and valorous nations of Christendom, have submitted to those terms, and those principles of intercourse, so long as to have given them, if prescription could give them, a claim of right, and a colour of conformity to the law of nature.

The fundamental principle of the Chinese empire is anti-commercial. It is founded entirely upon the second and third of Vattel's general principles, to the total exclusion of the first.

It admits no obligation to hold commercial intercourse with others. It utterly denies the equality of other nations with itself, and even their independence. It holds itself to be the centre of the terraqueous globe, equal to the heavenly host, and all other nations with whom it has any relations, political or commercial, as outside tributary barbarians—reverently submissive to the will of its despotic chief. It is upon this principle, openly avowed and inflexibly maintained, that the principal maritime nations of Europe, for several centuries, and the United States of America from the time of their acknowledged independence, have been content to hold commercial intercourse with the empire of China.

It is time that this enormous outrage upon the rights of nations should cease. These principles of the Chinese empire, too long connived at and truckled to by the mightiest Christian nations of the civilized world, have at length been brought into conflict with the principles and power of the British empire; and I cannot forbear to express the hope, that Great Britain, after taking the lead in the abolition of the African slave-trade and of slavery, and of the still more degrading tribute to the Barbary African Mahometans, will extend her liberating arm to the farthest bounds of Asia, and, at the close of the present contest, insist upon concluding the peace on terms of perfect equality with the Chinese empire; and that the future commerce shall be carried on upon terms of equality and

reciprocity between the two communities, parties to the trade, for the benefit of both, each retaining the right of prohibition and of regulation, to interdict any article or branch of trade injurious to itself, as, for example, the article of opium; and to secure itself against the practices of fraudulent traders and smugglers.

This is the true, and I apprehend, the only question at issue between the governments and nations of Great Britain and China.

It is a general, but I believe altogether mistaken, opinion, that the quarrel is merely for certain chests of opium, imported by British merchants into China, and seized by the Chinese government for having been imported contrary to law. This is a mere incident to the dispute; and no more the cause of the war, than the throwing overboard of the tea in Boston harbour was the cause of the North American revolution.

The cause of the war is, the pretension on the part of the Chinese, that in all their intercourse with other nations, political or commercial, their superiority must be implicitly acknowledged and manifested in humiliating forms. It is not creditable to the great, powerful, and enlightened nations of Europe, that for several centuries they have, for the sake of a profitable trade, submitted to their insolent and insulting pretension, equally contrary to the first principles of the law of nature, and of revealed religion—the natural equality of mankind—

Auri sacra fames,
Quid non mortalia pectora cogis?

¶ This submission to insult is the more extraordinary, in being practised by Christian nations, which, in their intercourse with one another, push the principle of equality and reciprocity to the minutest punctilios of forms.

On the justice of the cause between the two parties. Which has the righteous cause?

You have perhaps been surprised to hear me answer, Britain. Britain has the righteous cause.

But to prove it, I have been obliged to show that the opium question is not the cause of the war; my demonstration is not yet complete. The cause of the war is the *Ko-tow*!—the arrogant and insupportable pretensions of China, that she will hold commercial intercourse with the rest of mankind, not upon terms of equal reciprocity, but upon the most insulting and degrading forms of relation between lord and vassal."

As it is satisfactory to trace events to their true origin, and to understand the principles on which transactions really rest, we find in the opinions of an enlightened American, the guide to the history of the motives for the war with China, which was terminated by the treaty of Nankin, signed by the British and Chinese authorities in August, 1842.

It will appear, by what Mr. Adams relates, that a rupture with the Chinese, or a secession from all intercourse with them, was imperiously required by Great Britain, unless she condescended to perpetuate her own disgrace by continuing relations with China on terms of degrading inferiority.

The historical truth is, that this great nation, for many generations past, submitted to an intercourse with China, on terms of slavish inferiority to the authorities of that country, in order to secure the large profits on the tea-trade, to a number of merchants trading to the East, under the title or firm of the East India Company. This is the matter of fact, and Mr. Adams expresses naturally great astonishment that such a state of things should have so long existed. The governments of this country, down to the act of bringing the affair to an issue by an appeal to arms, are, together with the East India Company, alone responsible for the humiliation under which this nation so long carried on commercial intercourse with China.

It is evident, on the most transitory glance at the state of China and Hindostan, in the present epoch, that vast changes are on the eve of taking place in those countries. In all probability they will have a decisive effect, for good or evil, on the condition of this nation. The inhabitants of India must indeed be of wonderfully passive materials, if

they have not acquired some activity of thought, and added to their physical and mental structure, some portion of the energy of that race that rules them, and leads them on to schemes of conquest, that partake of the barbaric character appertaining to all Asiatic enterprises. A race of Dwarkanauth-Tagores, are now rising up, to instruct, enlighten, counsel, and perhaps lead the passive millions of Hindostan; and this race, with the moral courage of patriotic reformers, are braving the consequences of breaking through the strongest prejudices of their countrymen, and, in their liberty of food, giving a proof that they are exercising a freedom of thought, which shall yet be felt on the councils of government.

What effect all this shall have, no man can foresee. It may yet be reserved for the historian in some future age, to write the history of the decline and fall of the British empire, and to trace the transfer of power from an island in the northern ocean, to a throne erected on the banks of the Ganges.

THE LAST WORD GIVEN BY NAPOLEON.

Being an Observation made on the Island of Saint Helena to Las Casas; and intended as a note to pages 183 and 227 of this work.

Napoleon was gifted with a wonderful power of prophetic vision, but he was blinded to his own fate, and rushed to ruin, dazzled by the splendours which surrounded him. His account of the result of the settlement made by treaties at the general peace of 1815, by the government of this country, is, at the present time (26th April, 1843) enough to make the people of Great Britain and Ireland feel bitterly their altered circumstances, and look back with indignant vexation on the way in which this great nation, and all its commercial interests, have been trifled with by the dominant Aristocratic party, for the last thirty years; and how Wellington, who was the ambassador of Great Britain, and the dictator of Europe, in 1815, must now feel, if his stoicism has not long since blunted all his feelings, the degraded state of his country, placed in the humiliating situation of having to send a special ambassador to the slave-driving government of Brazil, to beg a commercial treaty—and be refused! and to negotiate with a parcel of intriguing Portuguese jobbers in Lisbon, for an abatement of duty on stock-fish, or of a few per cents on a yard of broad cloth—and his negotiation to be spurned! Heroes can fall into dotage, as nations can sink into decay, and Wellington himself, on the concerns of a great empire, appears to succumb to the genius of Napoleon reflected from the tomb.

One of the most ominous circumstances of the times is the apparent paralyzation of the men composing the present government of this country, and their want of moral and political courage. To use a homely phrase, they appear to be at their wits' end, and are absolutely puzzled and bewildered, on the choice between sugar at a cheap rate for the people, and port wine at a lower duty for themselves!

Prince Henry. For the sugar thou gavest me—
'Twas a pennyworth, was't not?

Francis. O lord, Sir! I would it had been two.

Prince Henry. I will give thee for it a thousand pounds:

Ask me when thou wilt, and thou shalt have it.

Henry IV. Part I.

The red wine first must rise in their fair cheeks, my lord;
Then we shall have them talk us to silence.

Henry VIII

“ After a twenty years’ war, after the blood and treasures that had been lavished in the common cause, after a triumph beyond all hope, what sort of peace has England concluded ? Her ambassador distributed the spoil generally, as he seemed to think fit, among the sovereigns of the Continent, and reserved nothing for his own country : he gave immense territories to Russia and Prussia ; and Austria acquired millions of population : What is the equivalent to England ? She was the soul of all this success, and paid so dearly for it, and now reaps the fruit of *the gratitude of the Continent*.— My continental system is continued, and the produce of her manufactures is excluded ; she might have scattered them over Europe. England possessed the right of doing this, and her circumstances required it ; her decisions would have been just, and who would have opposed them at the moment of the liberation ? She suffered the favourable moment to escape from her.”*

* Just as the last page was returned corrected to the press, the *Globe*, evening paper of 26th April, afforded the above remark of Napoleon, so verified by the occurrences of the day.

ERRATUM —In page 402, at the beginning of line 14 from the top, the reader is requested to supply the word “ twenty,” accidentally omitted

THE END